

TSUTOMU NIHEI

BLAME

ACADEMY

AND DON

CONTENTS

01 ZEB-NOID

02 BLAME ACADEMY!

03 BLAME ACADEMY! FIELD TRIP
TO NARA

04 BLAME ACADEMY! BENEATH
THE SAKURA TOWER

05 PACKAGE

06 NETSPHERE ENGINEER

07 PUMP

08 BLAME!2 EIGHTH-GENERATION
PCELL'S MEGASTRUCTURE ESCAPE
CHRONICLE

09 GOD OF THE SWAMP

10 BATTLE LEPIDOPTERAN HAWK
MOTHS

BLAME ACADEMY! AND SO ON
COMMENTARY, BY TOHRU HONDA

01

ZEB-NOID

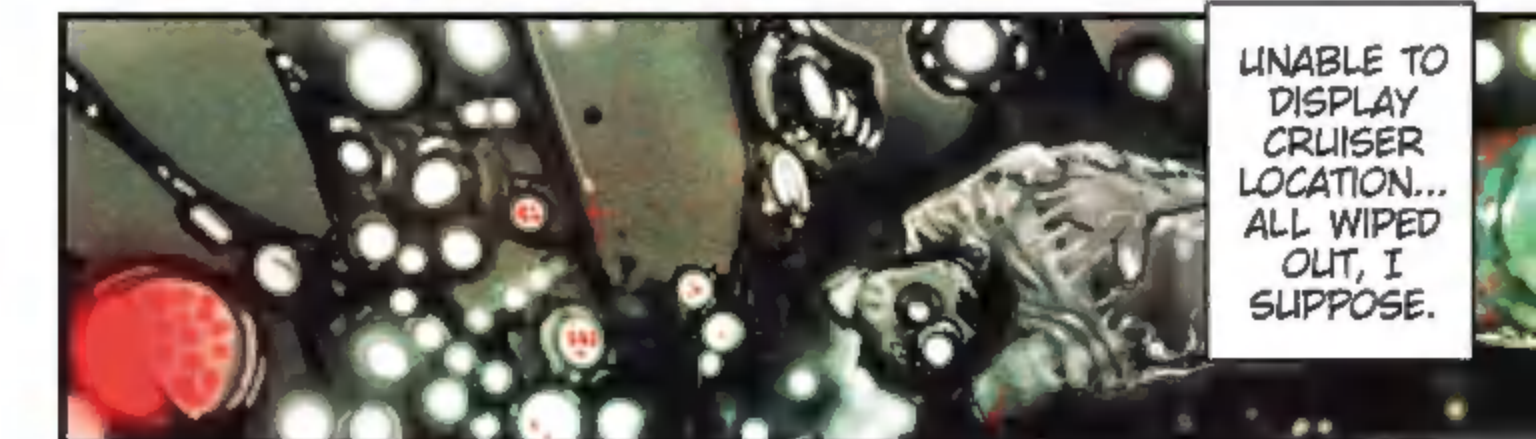


THE WAR AGAINST THE FLIES THAT BEGAN HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO WITH THE BIRTH OF HUMANITY HAD MIGRATED FROM ITS GENESIS ON EARTH TO A DISTANT PLANET, WHERE IT APPROACHED ITS CONCLUSION...



SYSTEM
RE-
CHECK...

FULL
PHASE
CHARGE,
MOBILITY
SYSTEMS
UNABLE TO
BOOT...



UNABLE TO
DISPLAY
CRUISER
LOCATION...
ALL WIPED
OUT, I
SUPPOSE.



ONE
NEEDLE-
FLY AD-
PROACH-
ING...

...
COMING
TO FINISH
ME OFF.

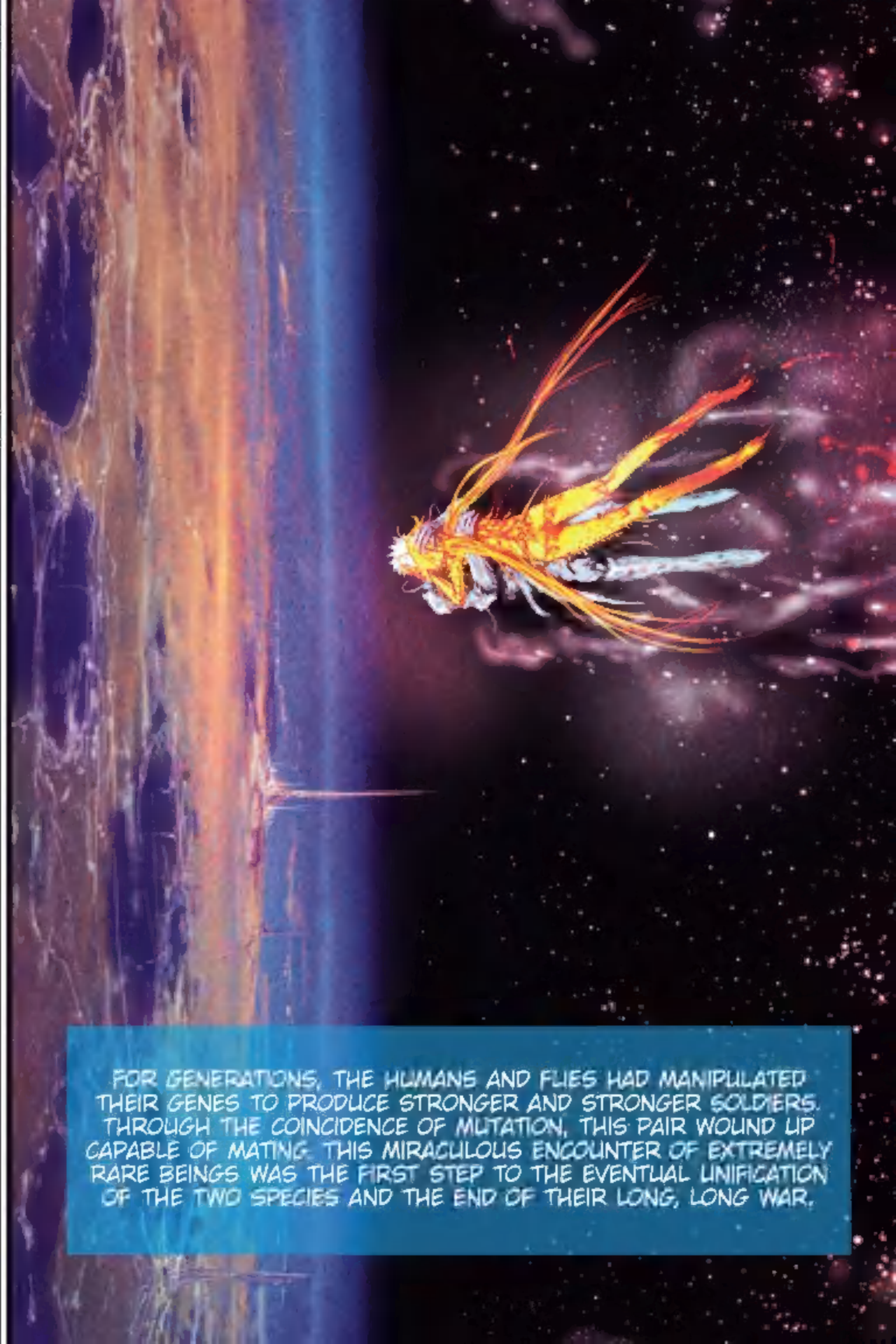


RE-
CHECK...
NO RE-
SPONSE.









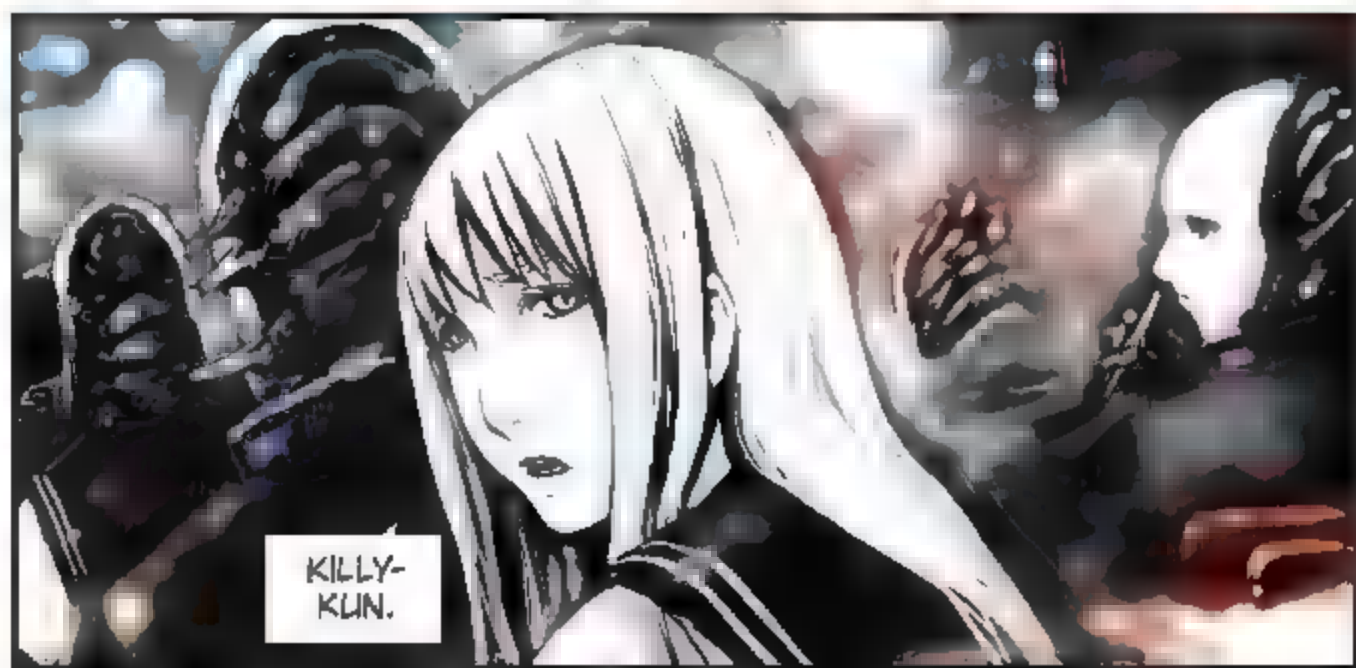
FOR GENERATIONS, THE HUMANS AND FLIES HAD MANIPULATED THEIR GENES TO PRODUCE STRONGER AND STRONGER SOLDIERS. THROUGH THE COINCIDENCE OF MUTATION, THIS PAIR WOUND UP CAPABLE OF MATING. THIS MIRACULOUS ENCOUNTER OF EXTREMELY RARE BEINGS WAS THE FIRST STEP TO THE EVENTUAL UNIFICATION OF THE TWO SPECIES AND THE END OF THEIR LONG, LONG WAR.

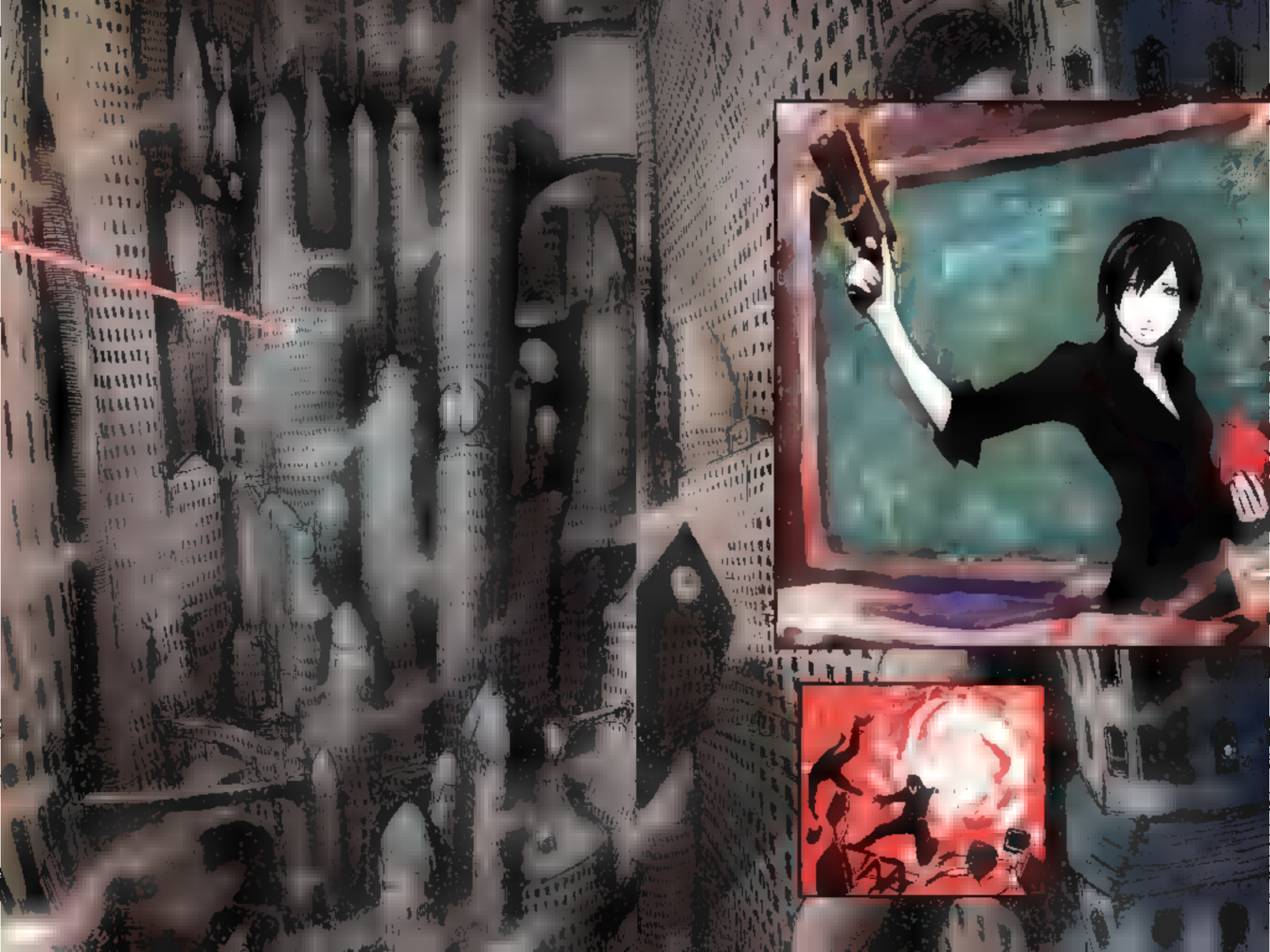
01

ZEB-NOID - END

02

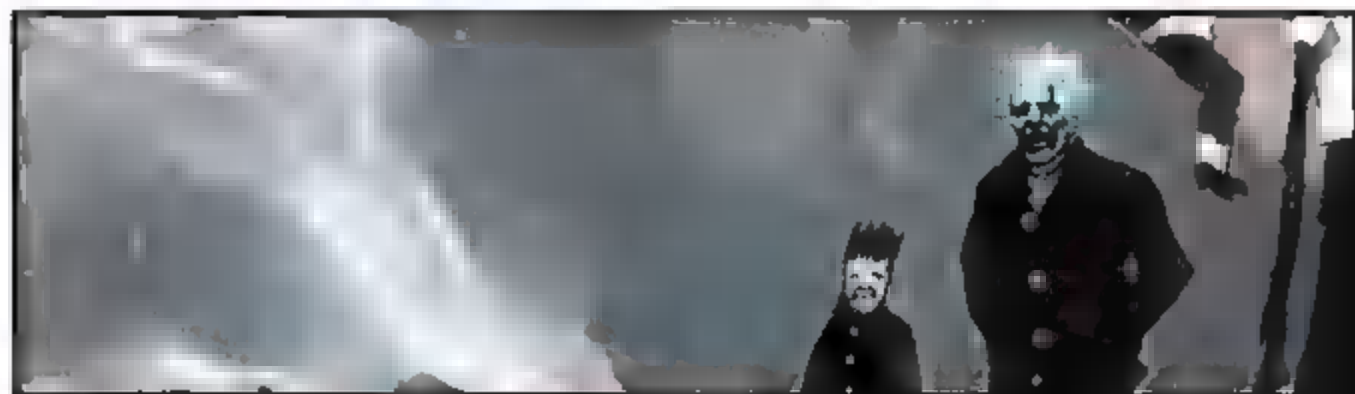
BLAME ACADEMY

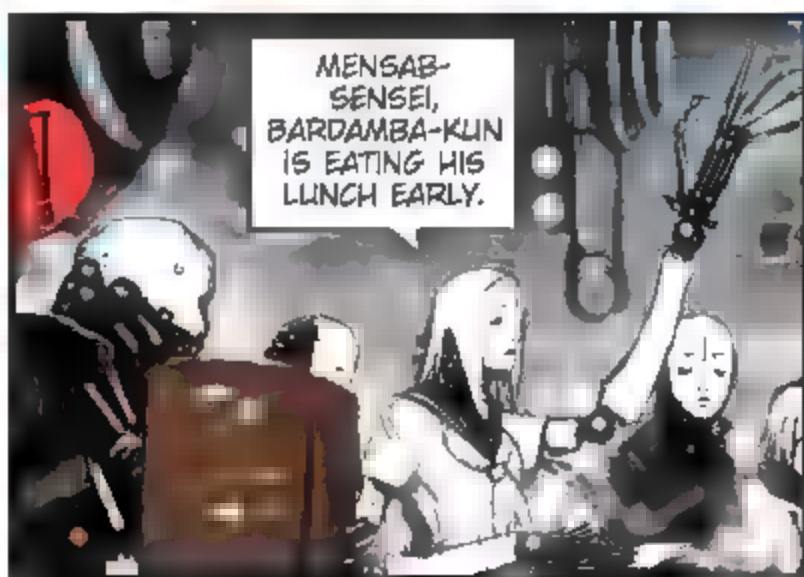
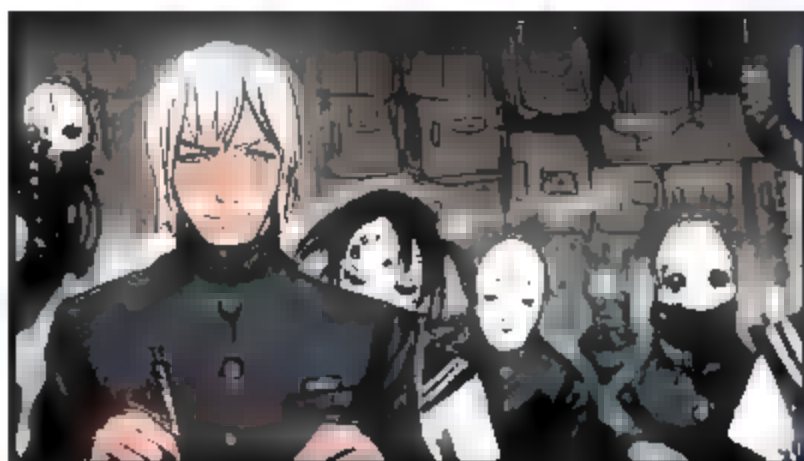
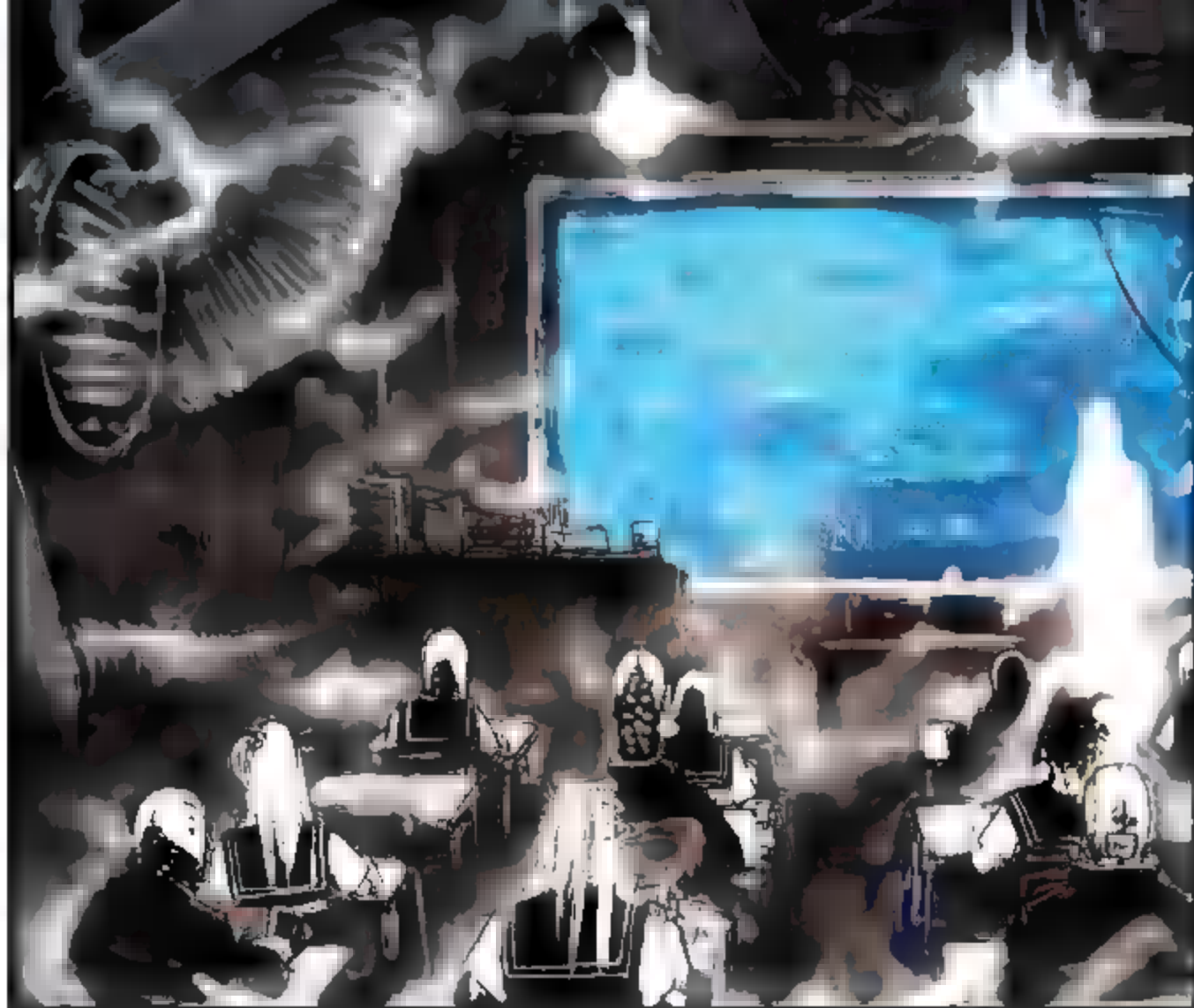


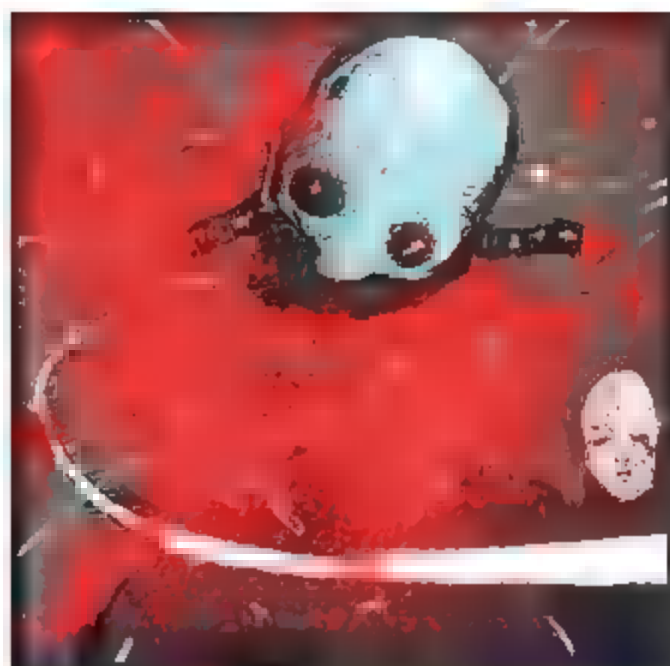
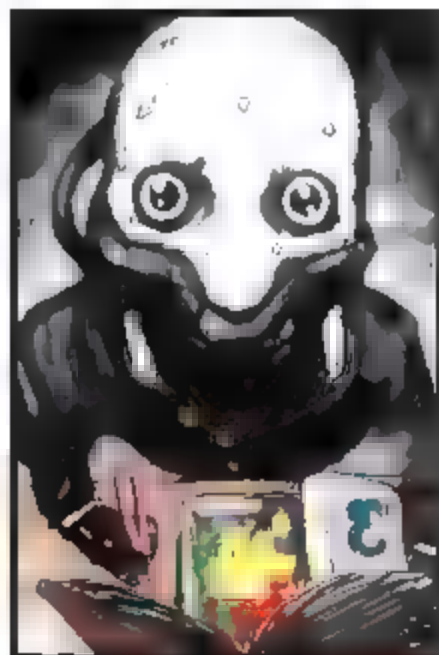








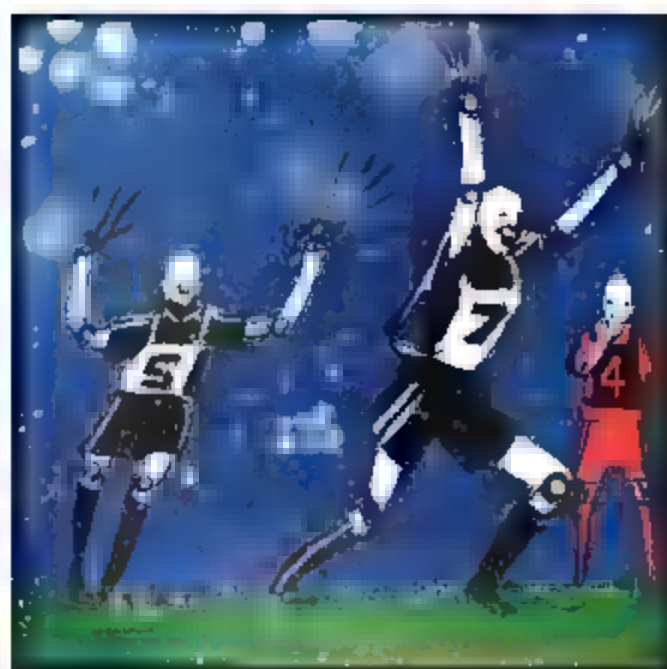
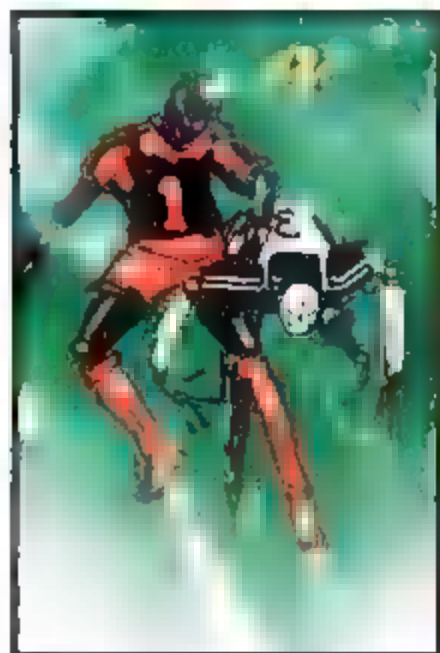


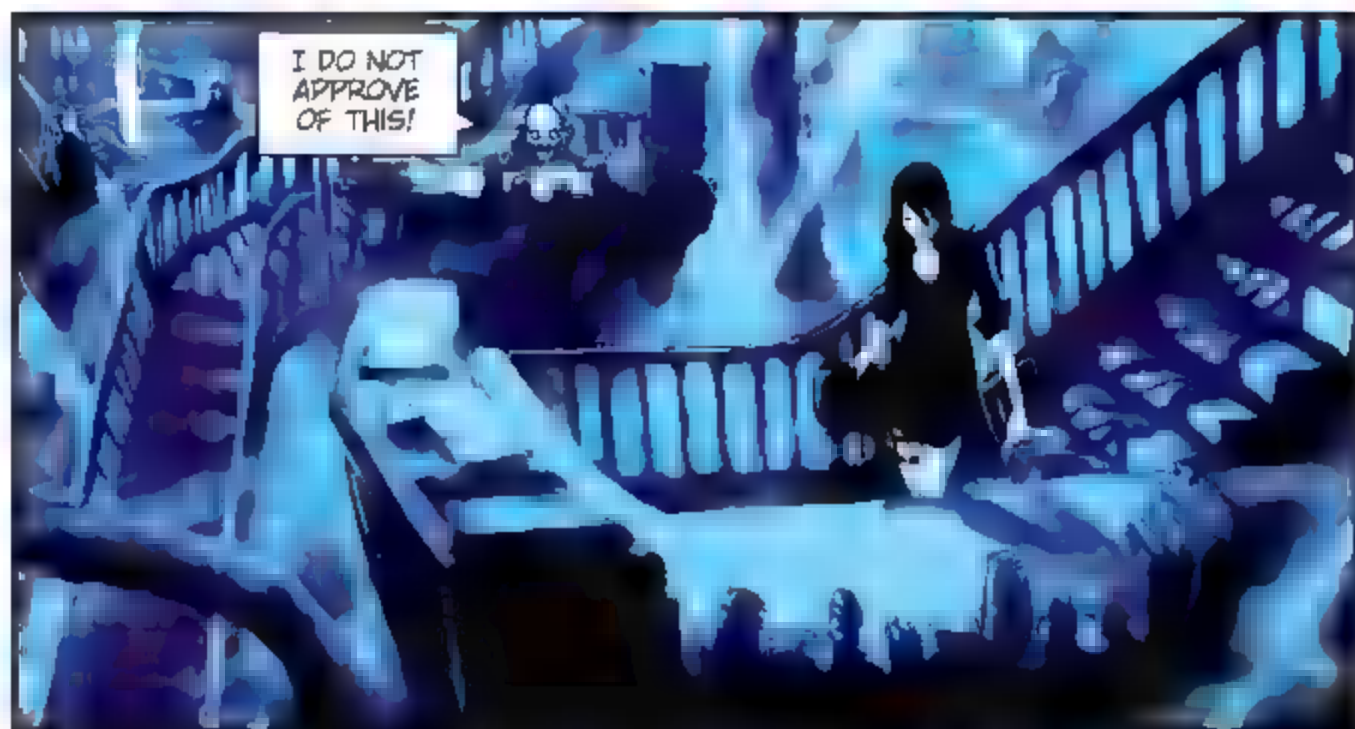


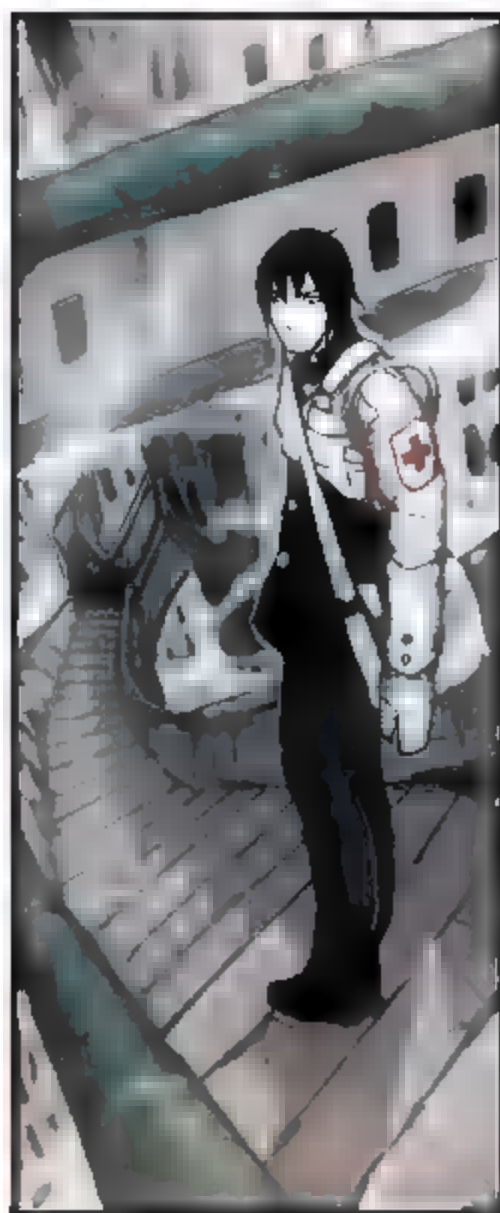


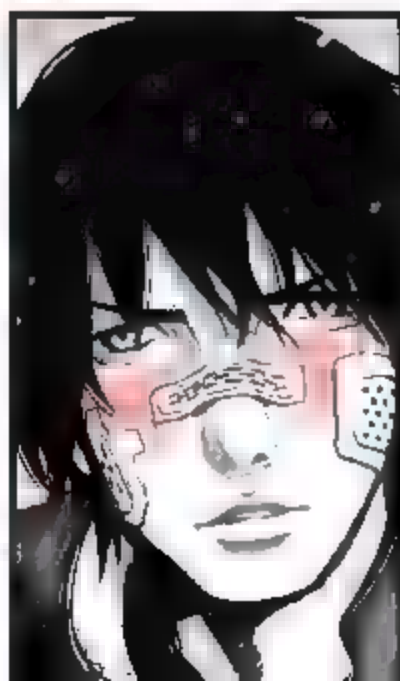
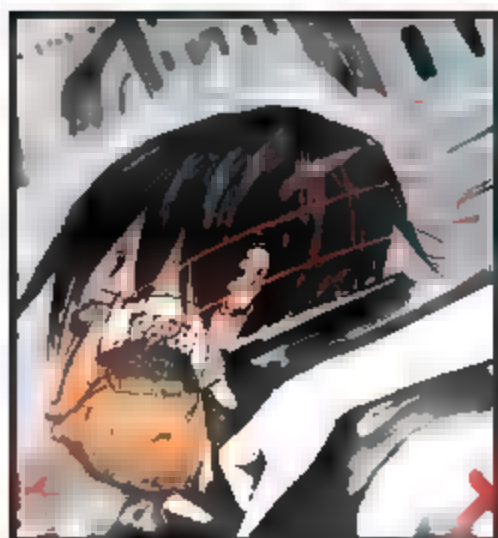


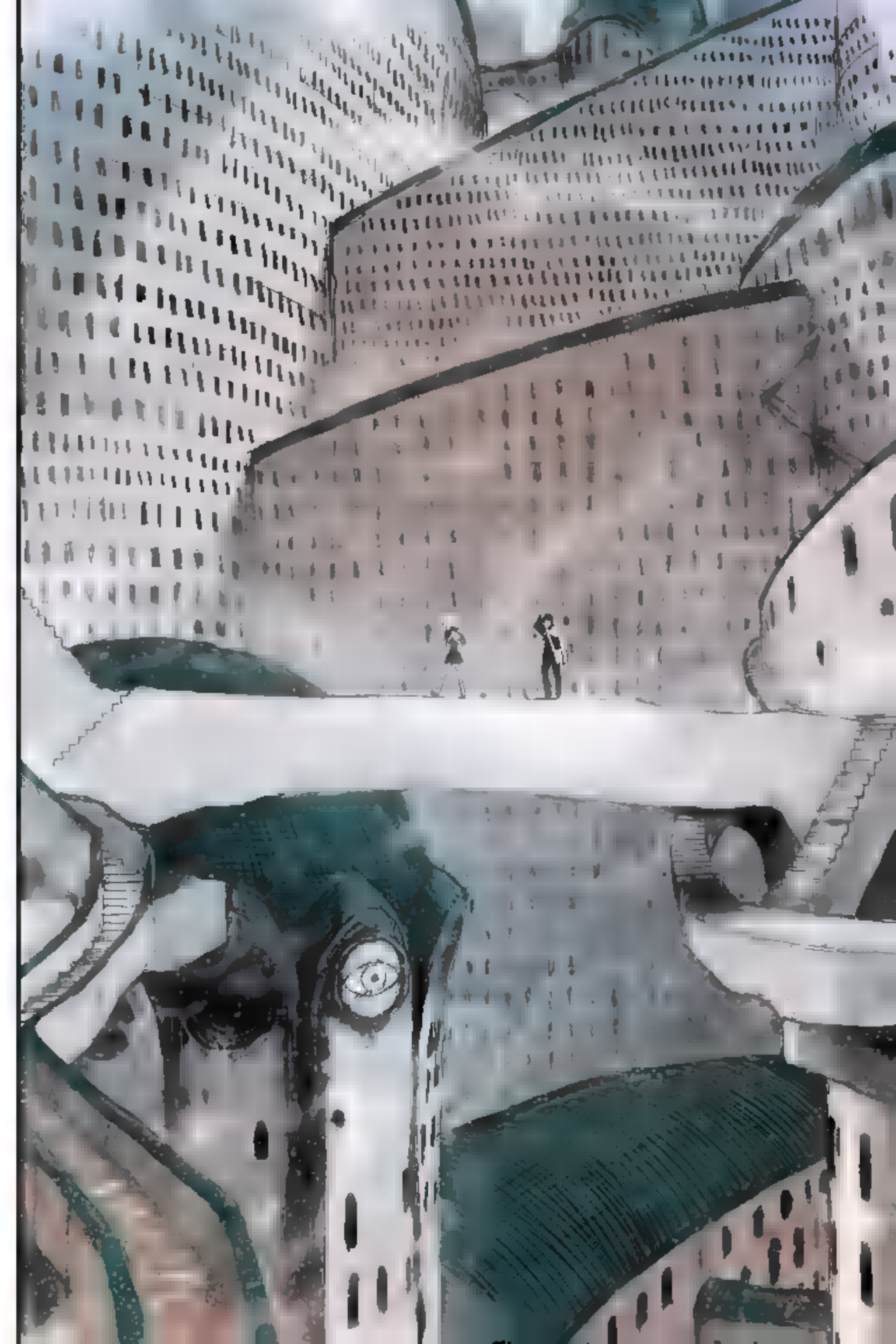












02

BLAME ACADEMY - END

03

BLAKE ACADEMY!
FIELD TRIP TO NARA



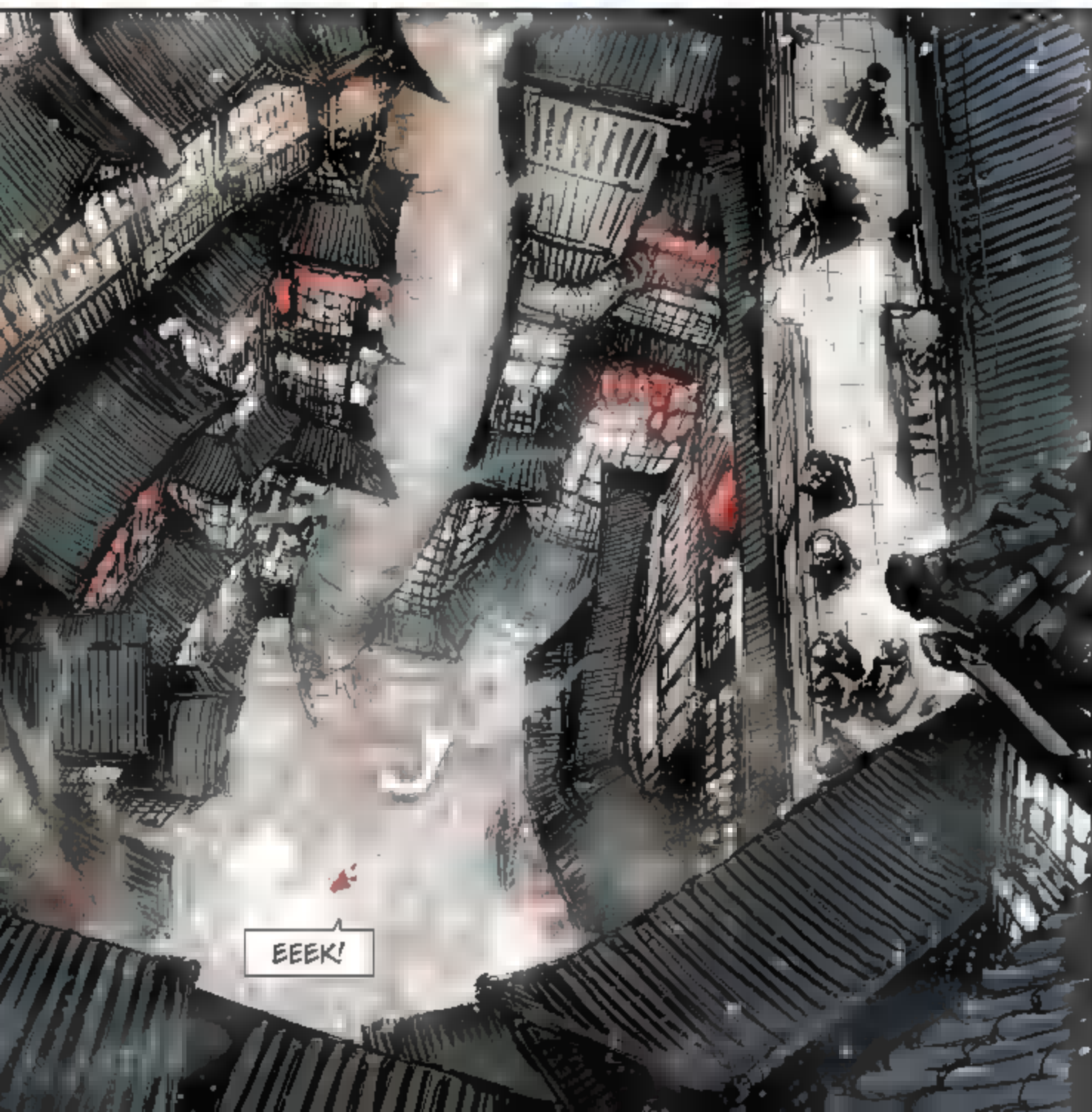
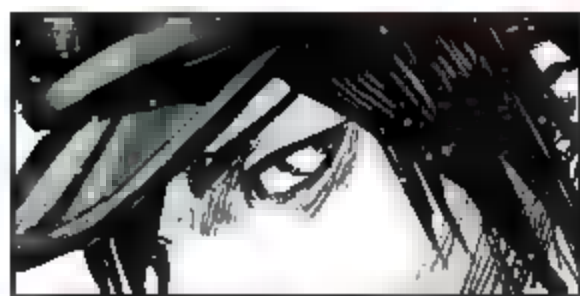


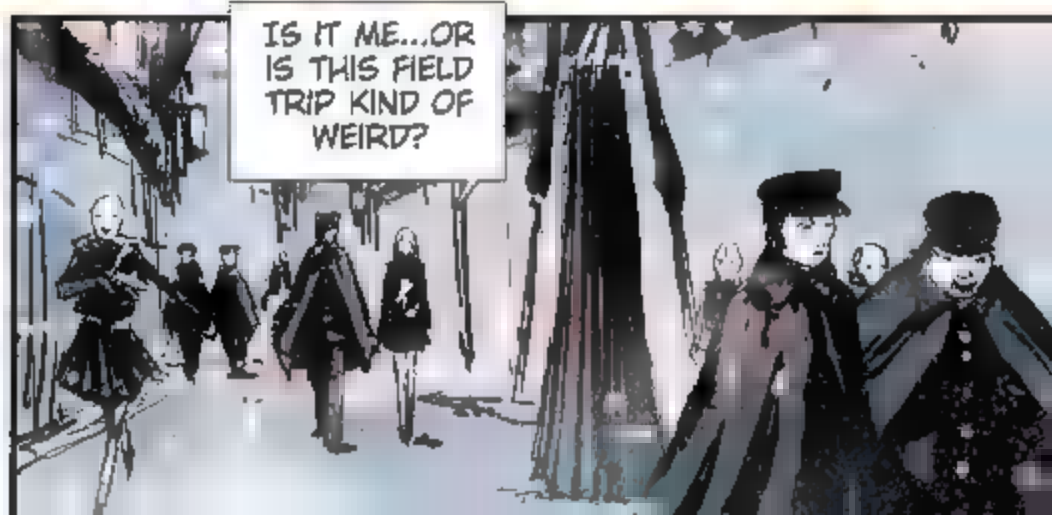
LISTEN TO THIS, KILLY-KUN!
IT SAYS THAT IN THE AGE
THIS TEMPLE WAS BUILT,
PEOPLE REALLY DID JUMP
OFF THE PLATFORM TO
THE GROUND BELOW.

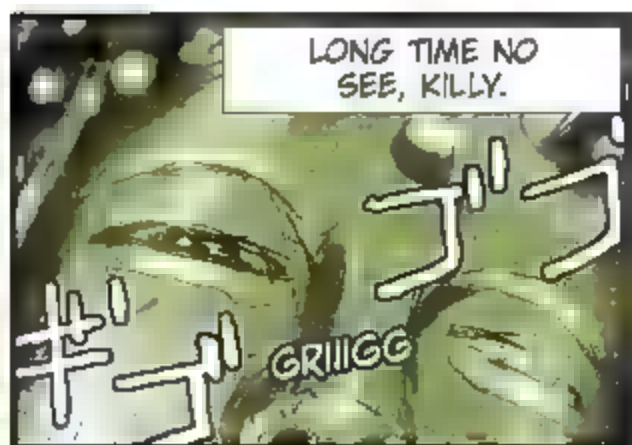
THAT'S AMAZING!
AND HARDLY ANY OF
THEM DIED.

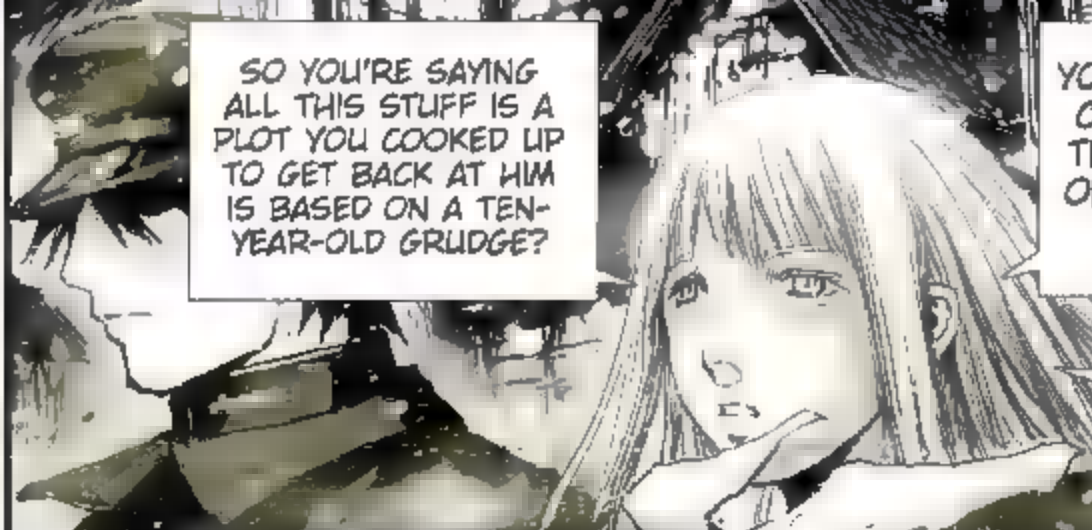


THE ANCIENTS
MUST HAVE HAD
VERY STURDY
BODIES.









SO YOU'RE SAYING
ALL THIS STUFF IS A
PLOT YOU COOKED UP
TO GET BACK AT HIM
IS BASED ON A TEN-
YEAR-OLD GRUDGE?

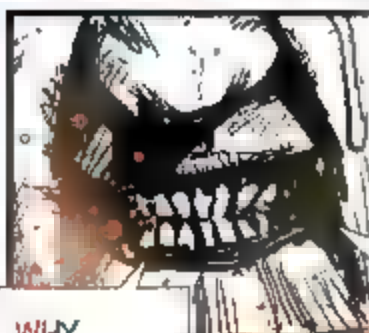
YOU'RE THE SILICON
CREATURES FROM
THE FIRST VOLUME
OF BLAME!, AREN'T
YOU?

BUT I THOUGHT
KILLY SHOT
YOU...



MY ANGER
STEMS FROM
THREE YEARS
AGO!!

NO! LOOK
AT THIS!!



LOOK AT YOU
ALL, CARRYING ON
LIKE FOOLS AND
PRETENDING TO BE
SCHOOL CLASS-
MATES. AND YET...

WHY
HASN'T
EVERYONE
RAGED
ETERNALLY
AGAINST
MY
ONLY
IMAGE
?



I
DIDN'T EVEN...
SHOW UP...



BLAME
ACADEMY
SCHOOL IS A
BATTLEFIELD

SHINJI NIHEI



TAKE THIS!!!



DAMN YOU!
WHAT WAS
YOUR NAME--
CIBO? YOU
REALLY WANT
TO HOG THE
SPOTLIGHT
SO BAD?! YOU
AMATEUR!



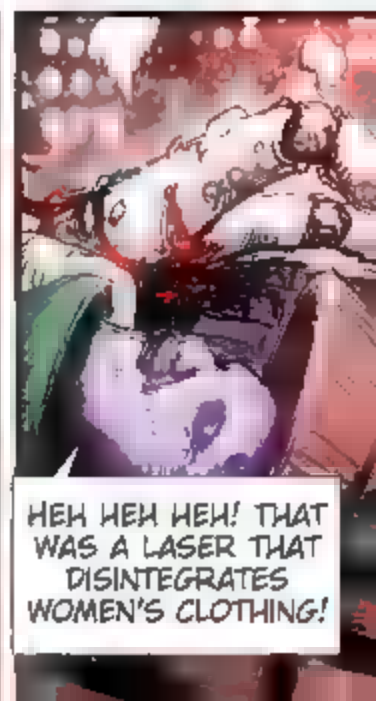
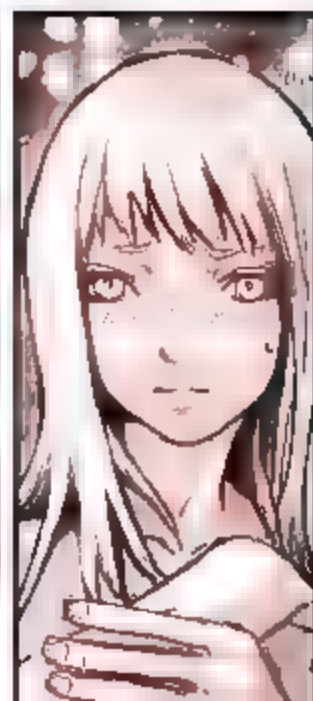
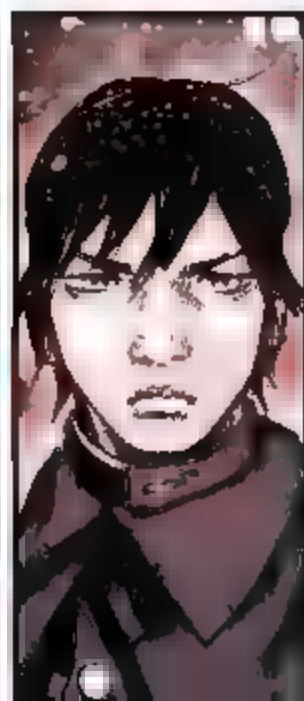
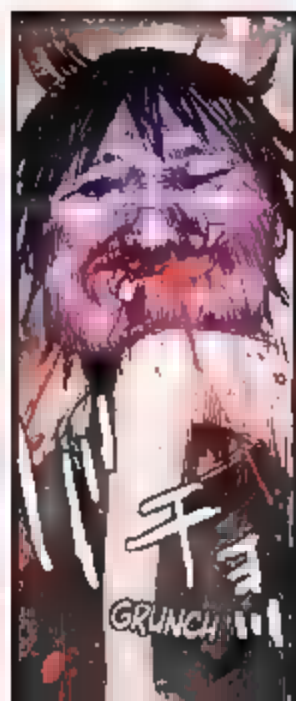
BLAM!



"VWO HOH
HOH," INDEED!
YOUR WEAPON
DID NOTHING!



ZOOM

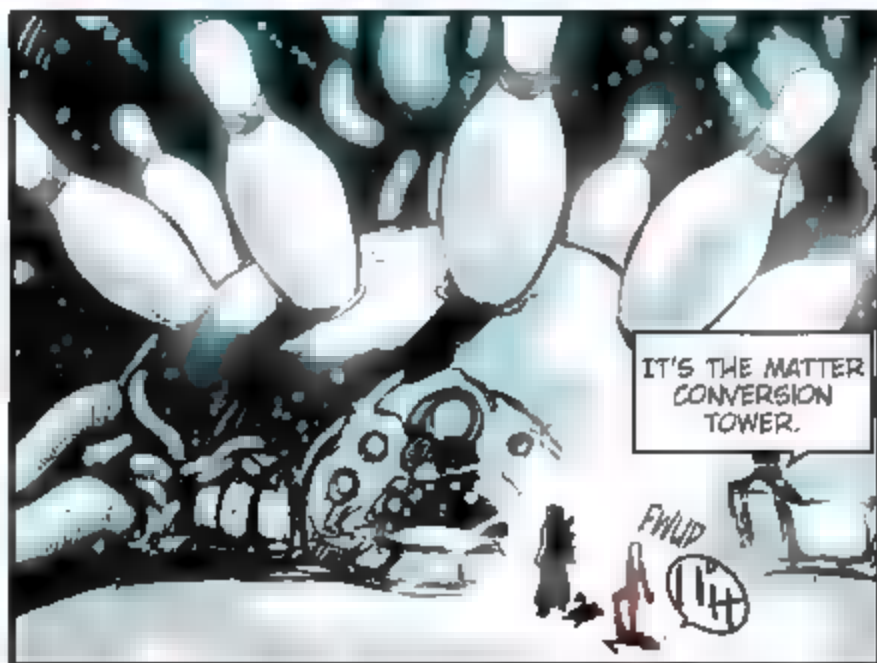


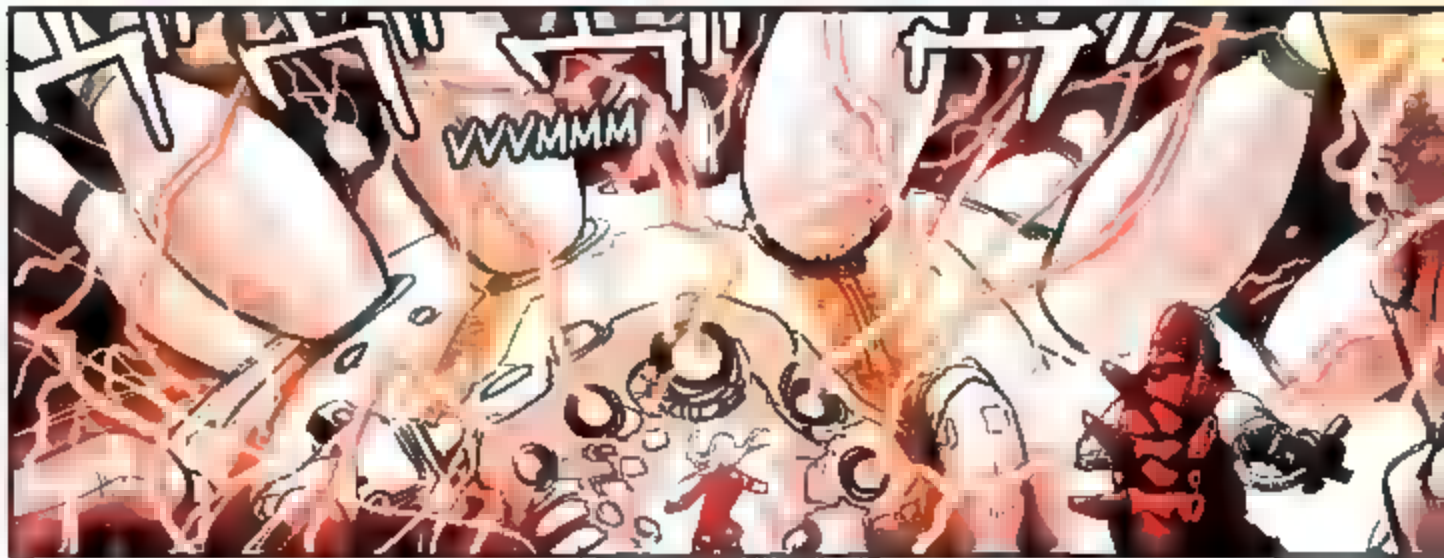
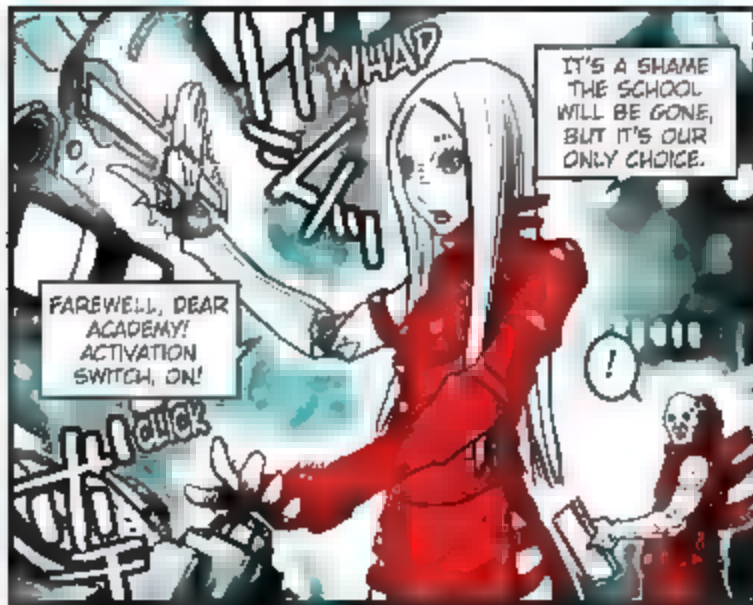
03

ELITE ACADEMY
FIELD TRIP TO NARA - END

04

GLANE ACADEMY
BENEATH THE
SAKURA TOWER



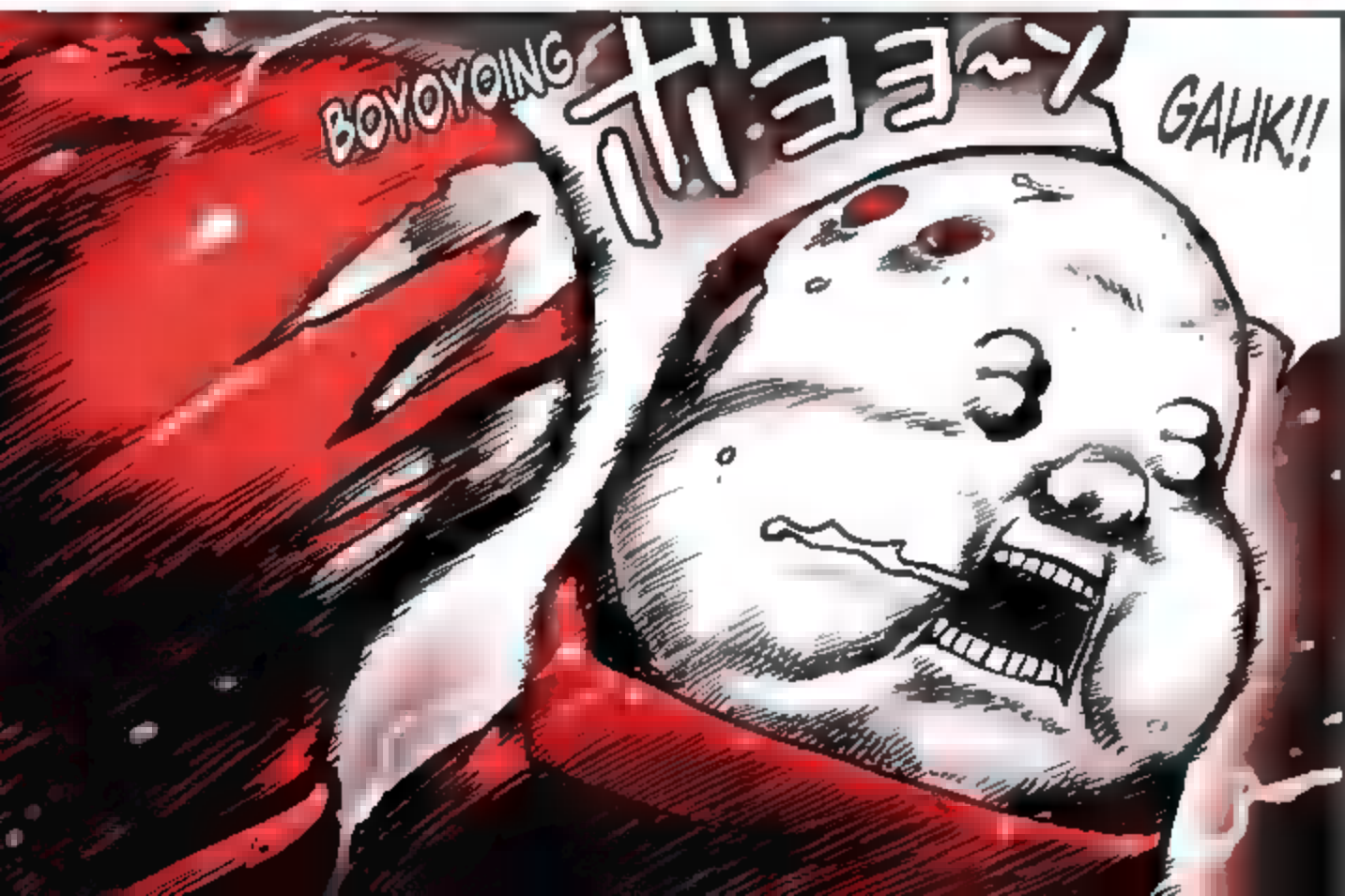
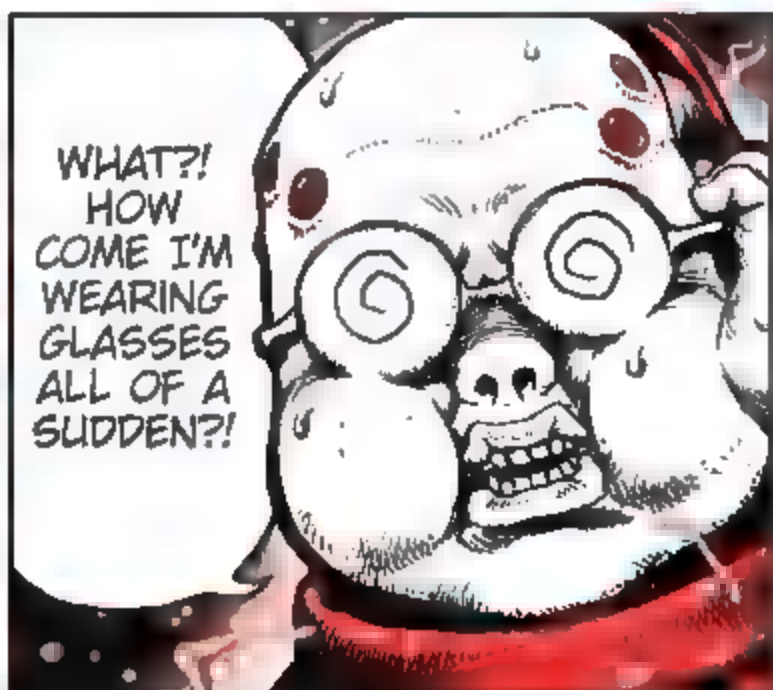


*MOEFICATION DISPLAY (CRITICALLY UNSTABLE, DO NOT USE)



*CRITICALLY UNSTABLE
DO NOT USE



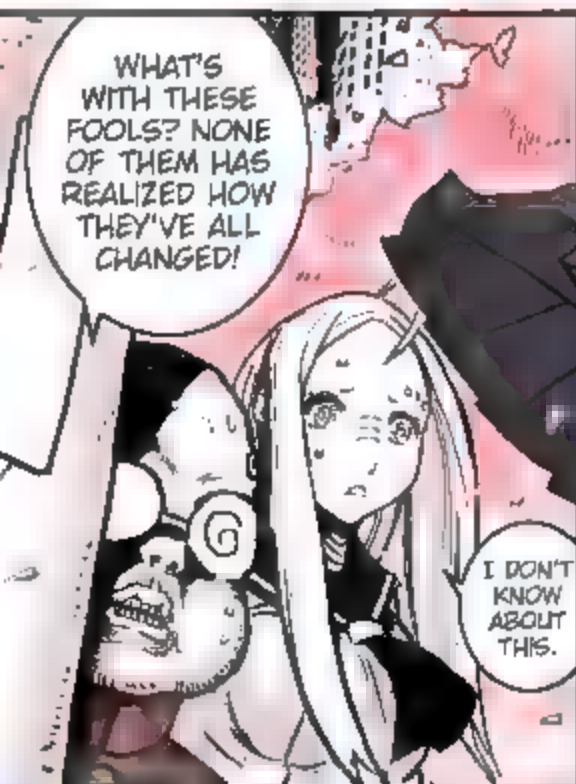


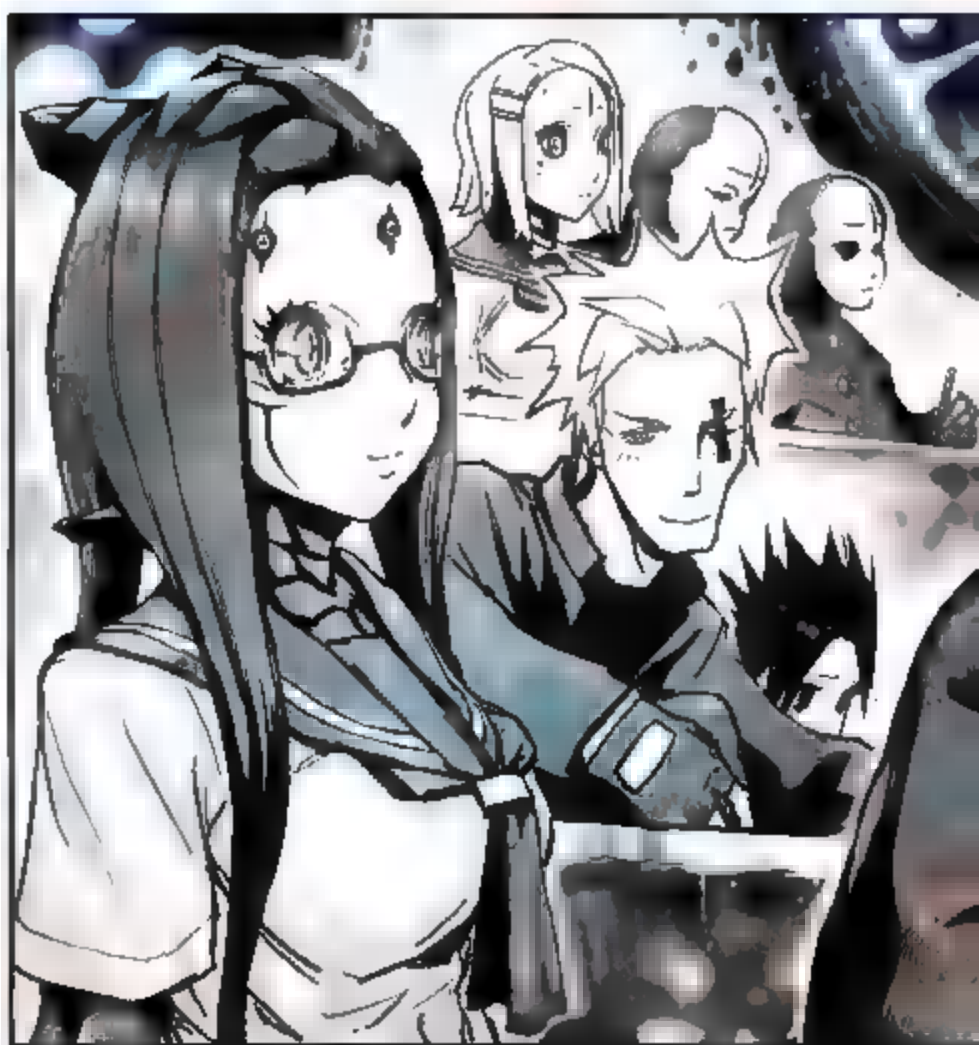
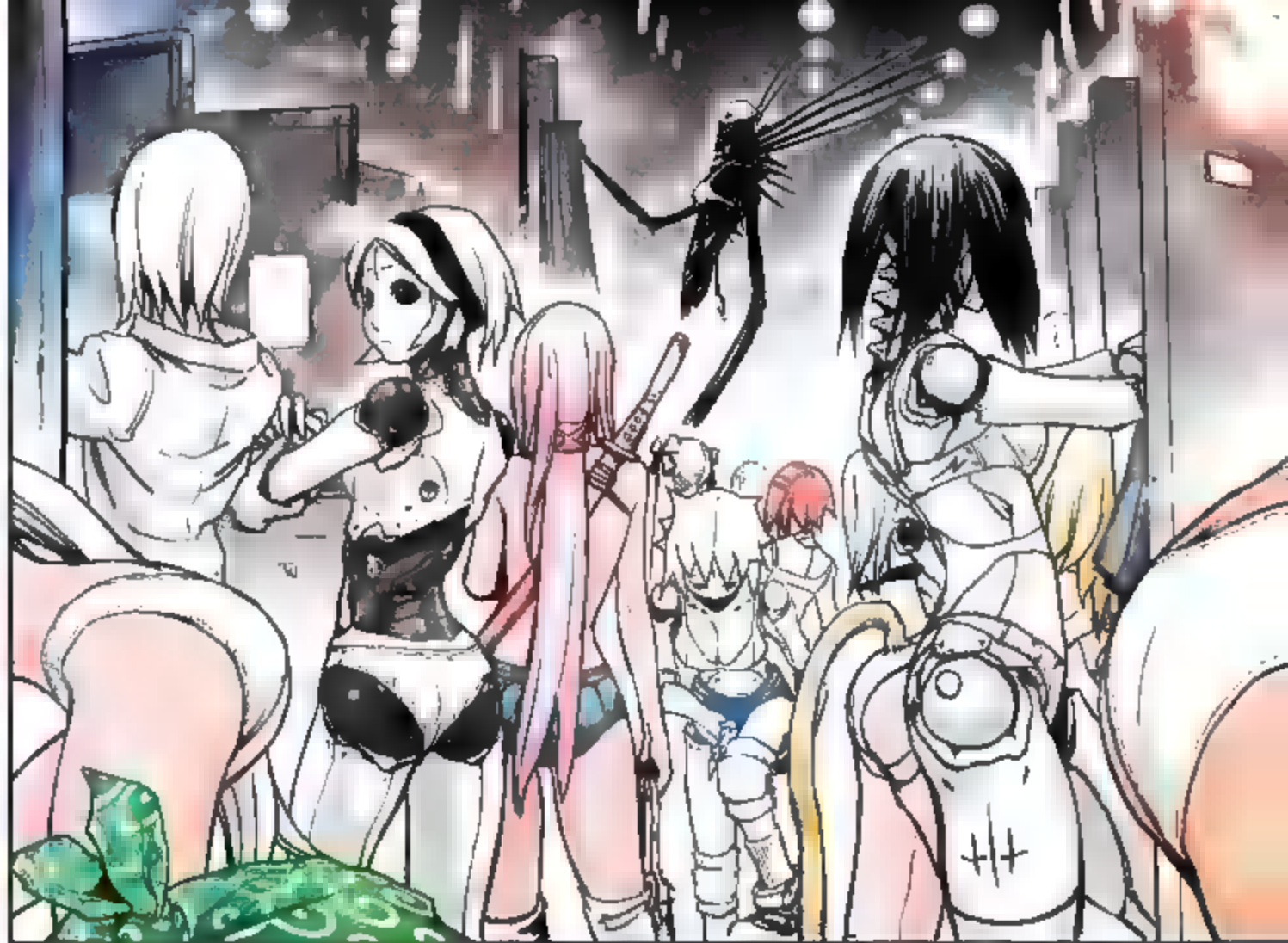


WHAT'S
WITH
YOUR
FACE?
WHAT'S
WITH...
THOSE
?!

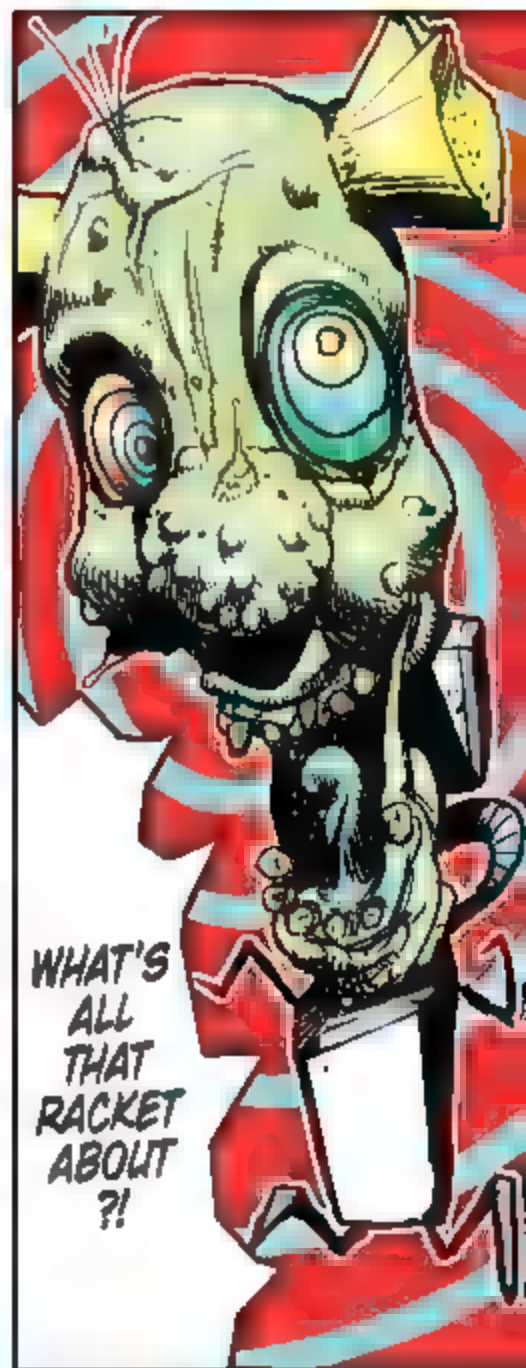
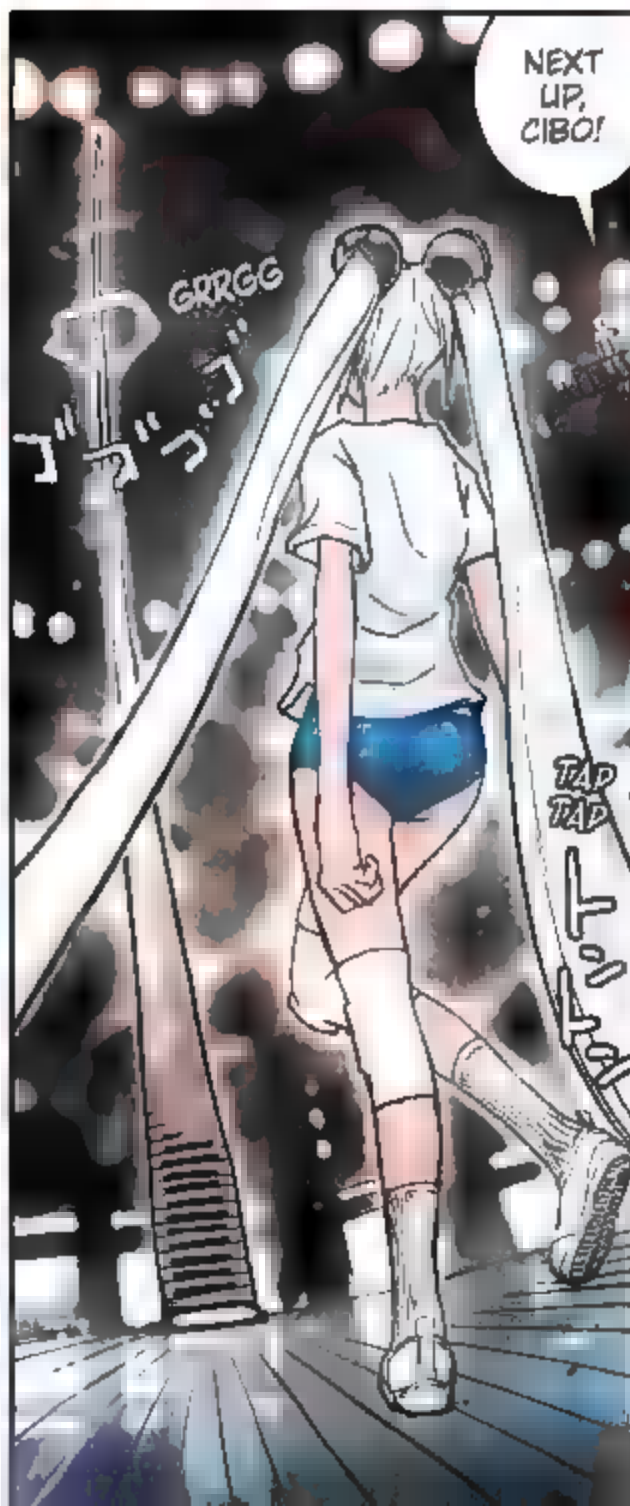
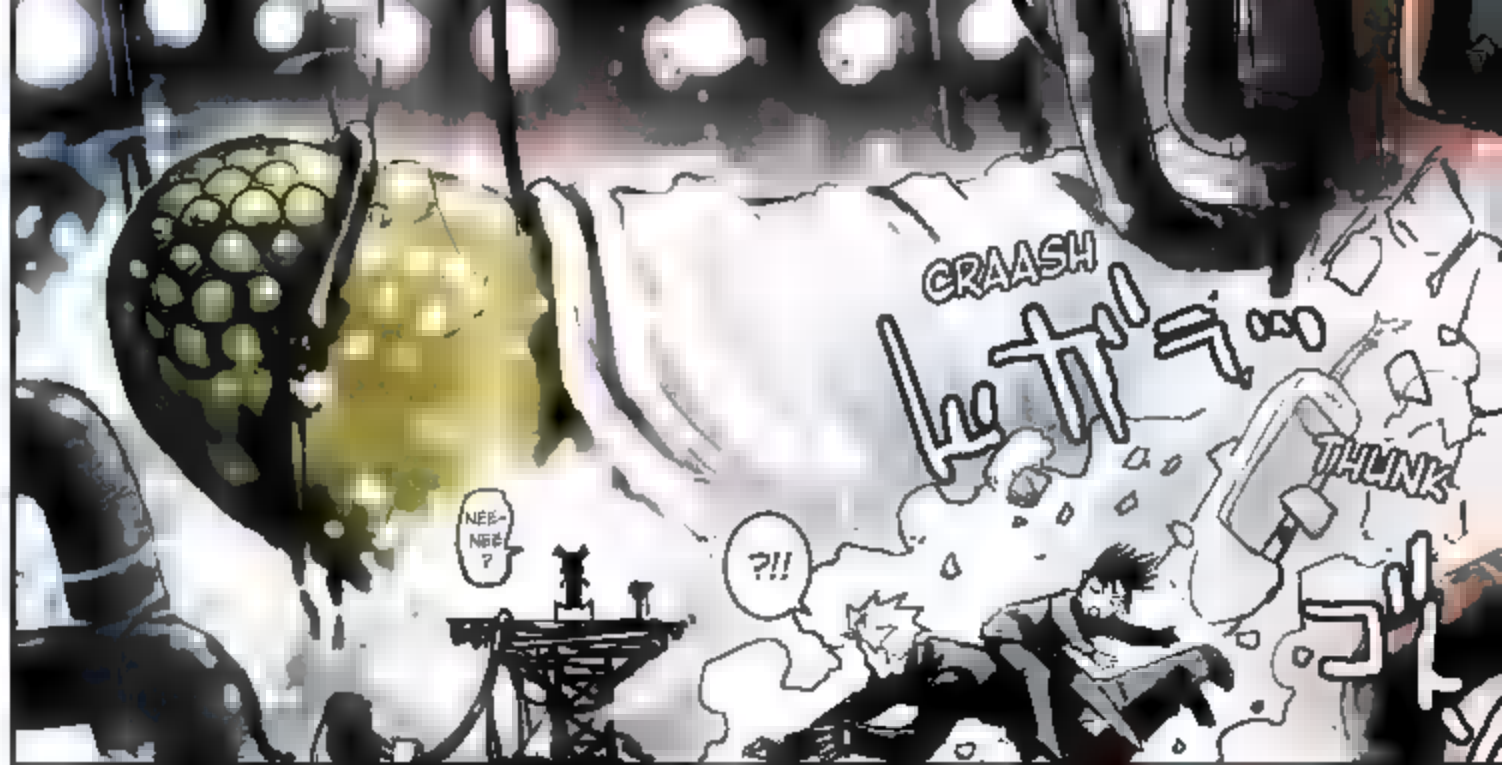
HMM...
AS A MATTER
OF FACT, WE
MIGHT BE ABLE
TO SLIP INTO
THE SCHOOL
LIKE THIS!!

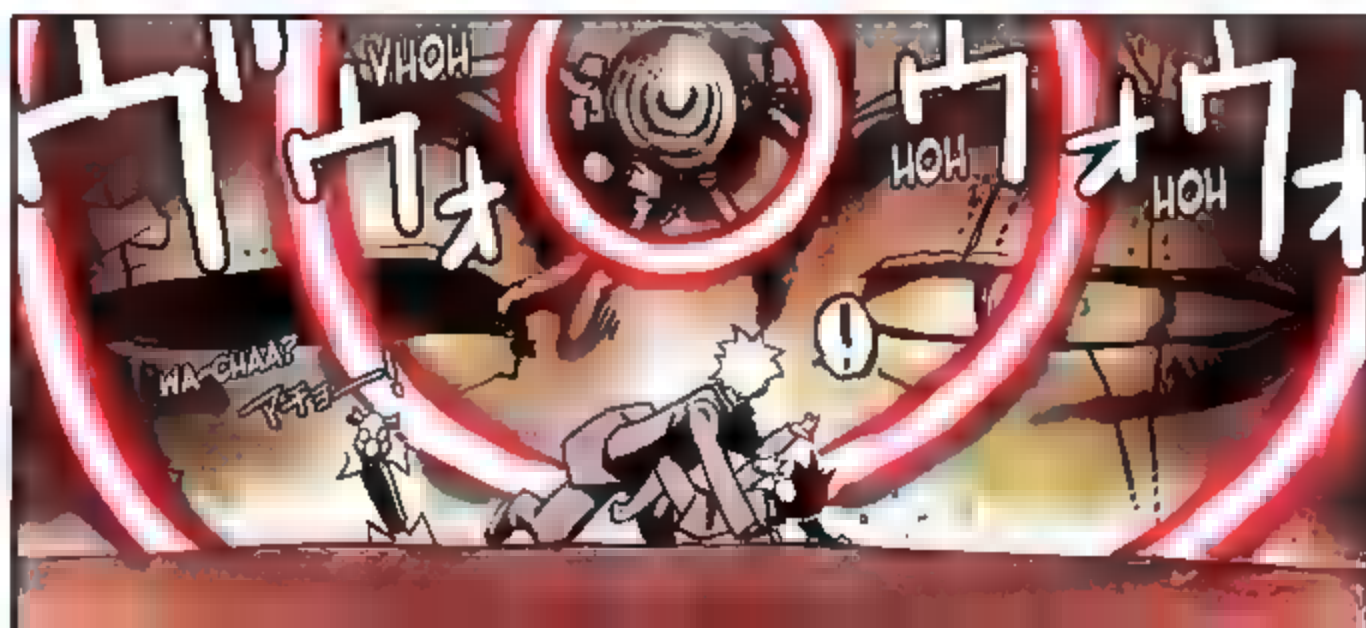
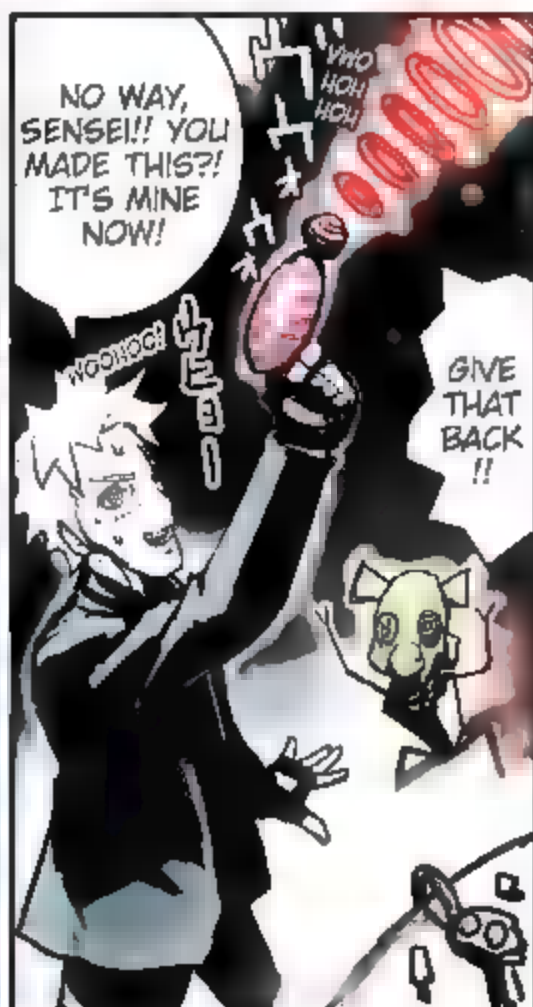
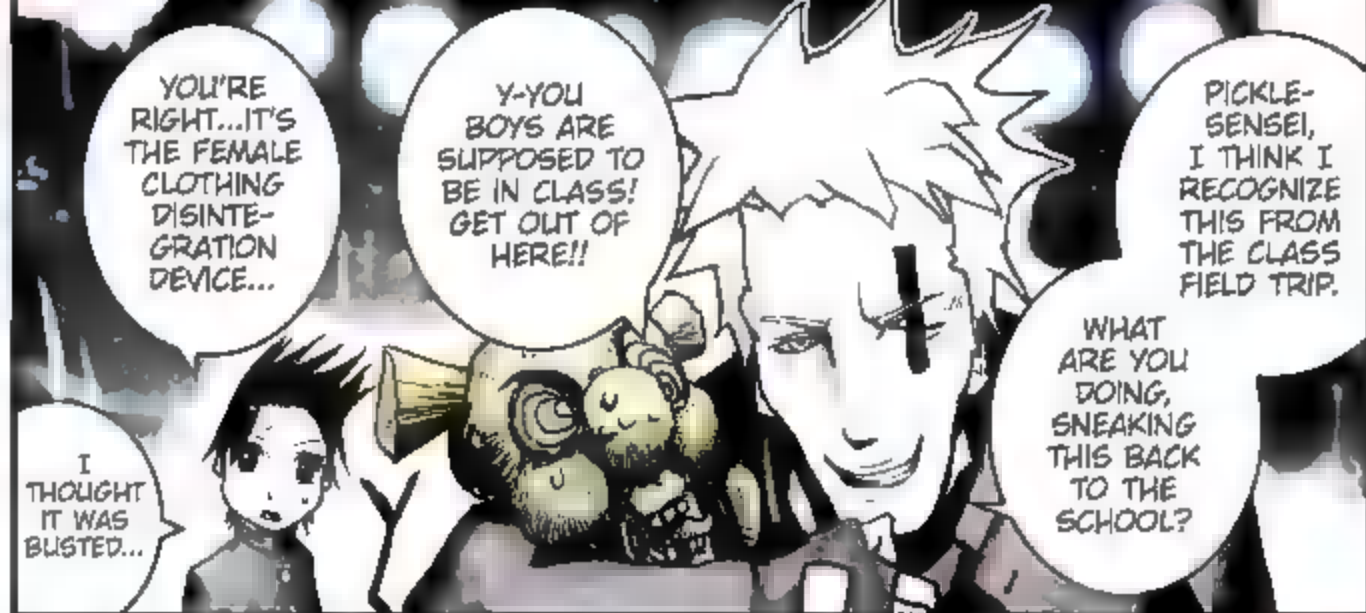
CRACK

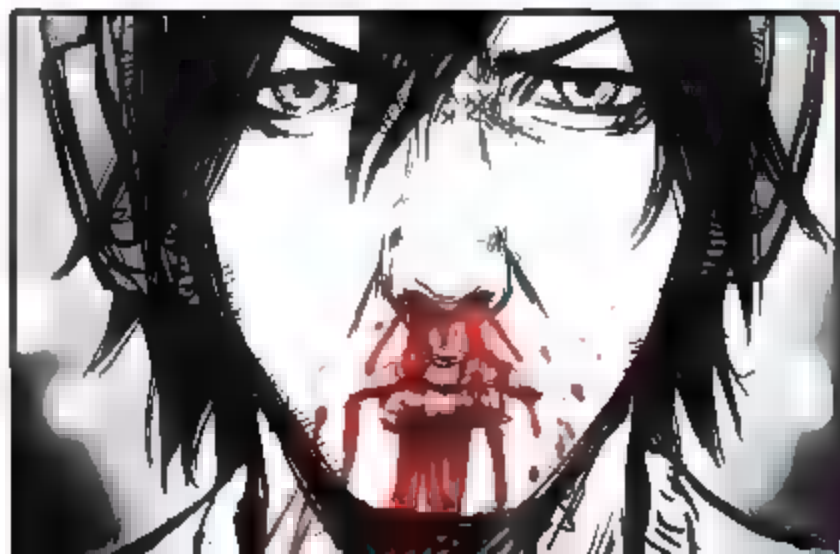
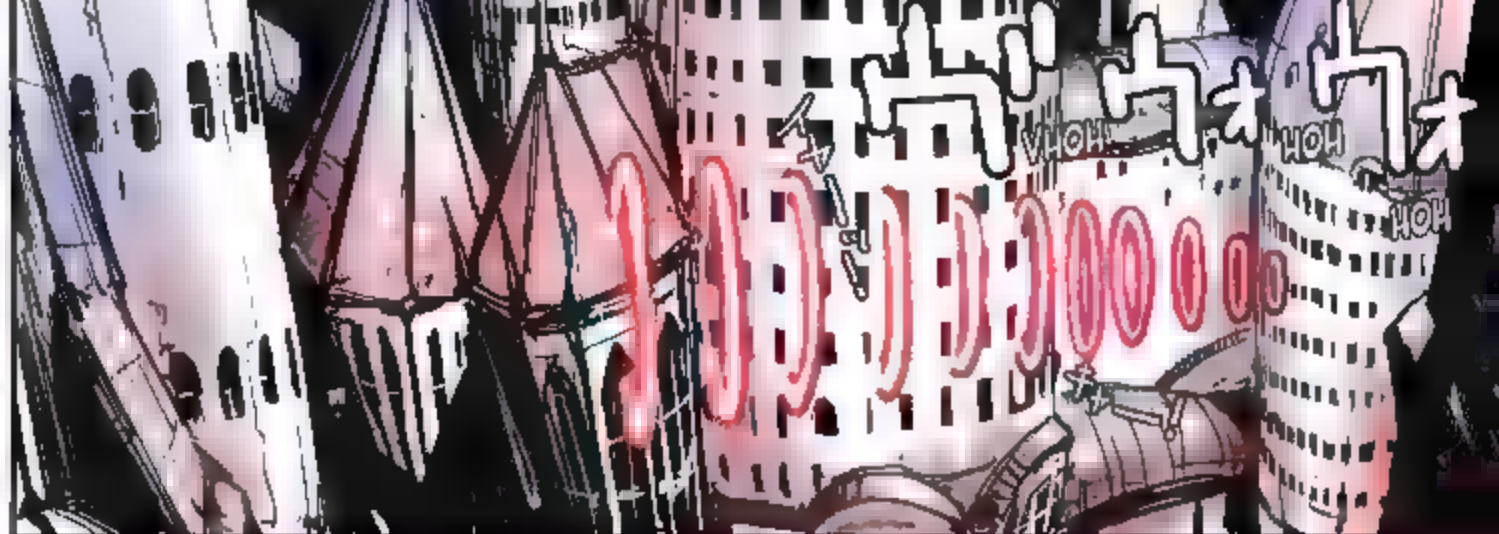


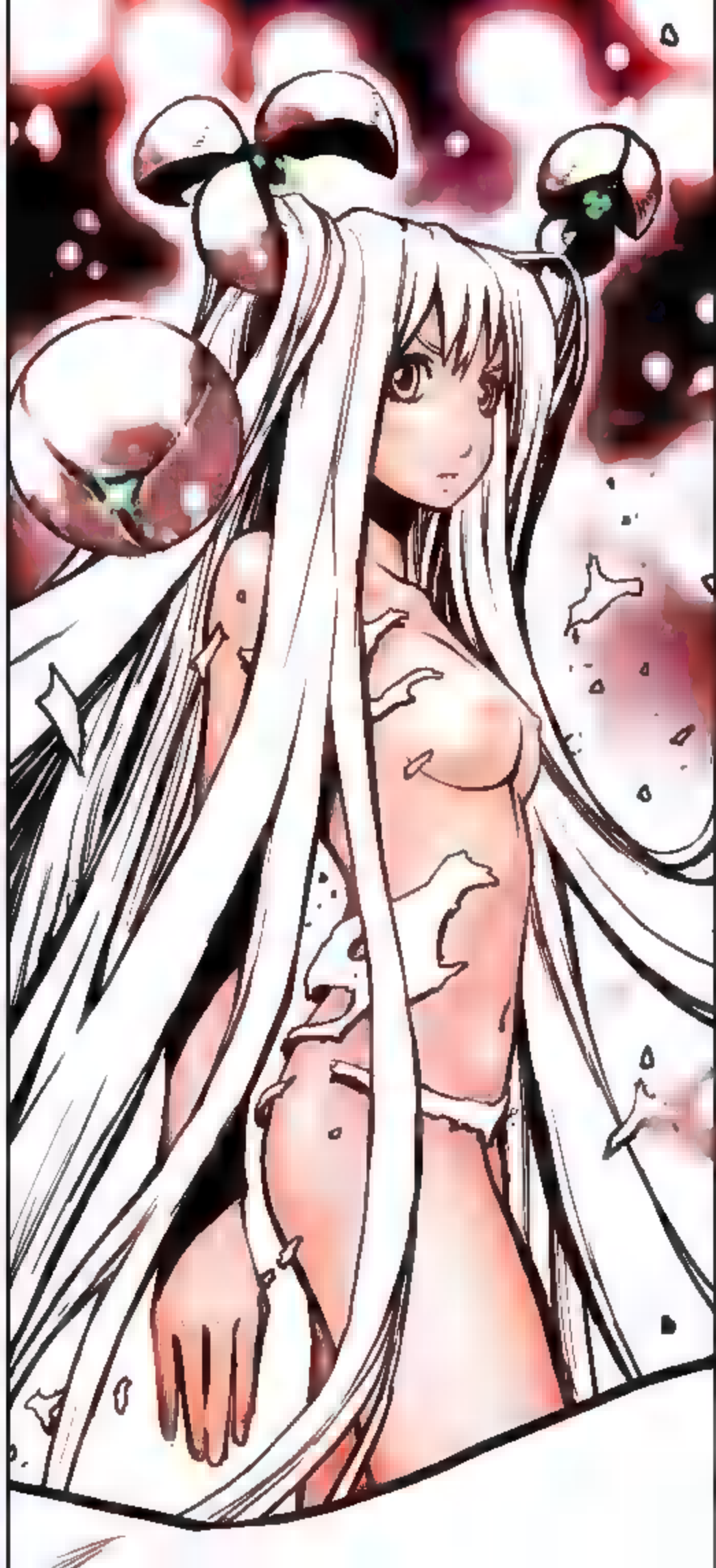




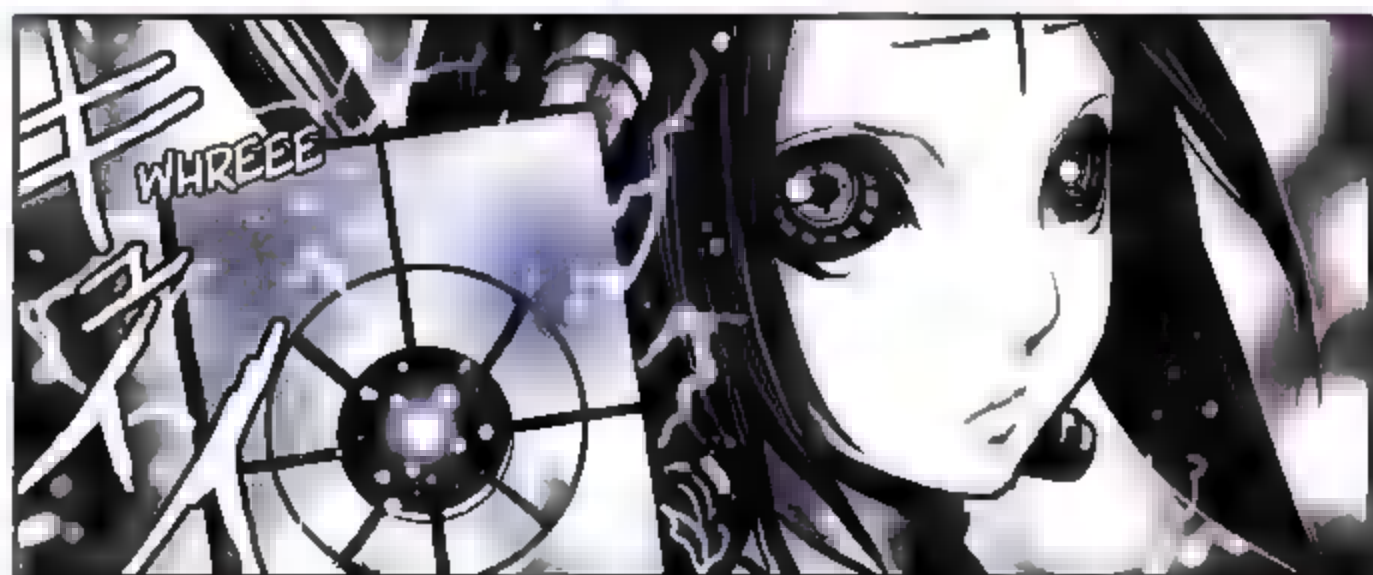


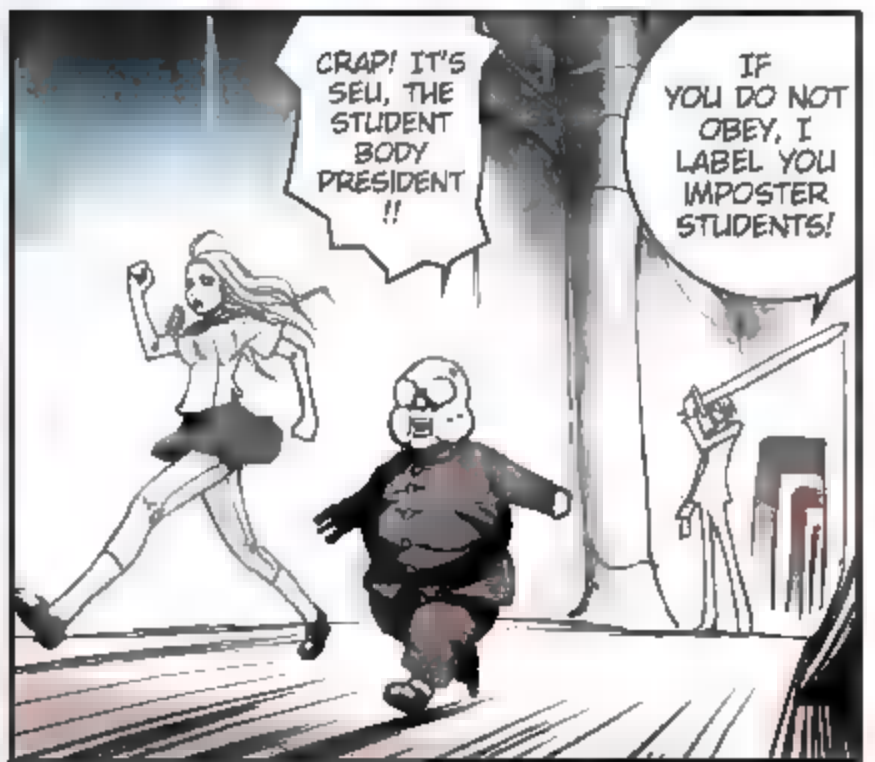
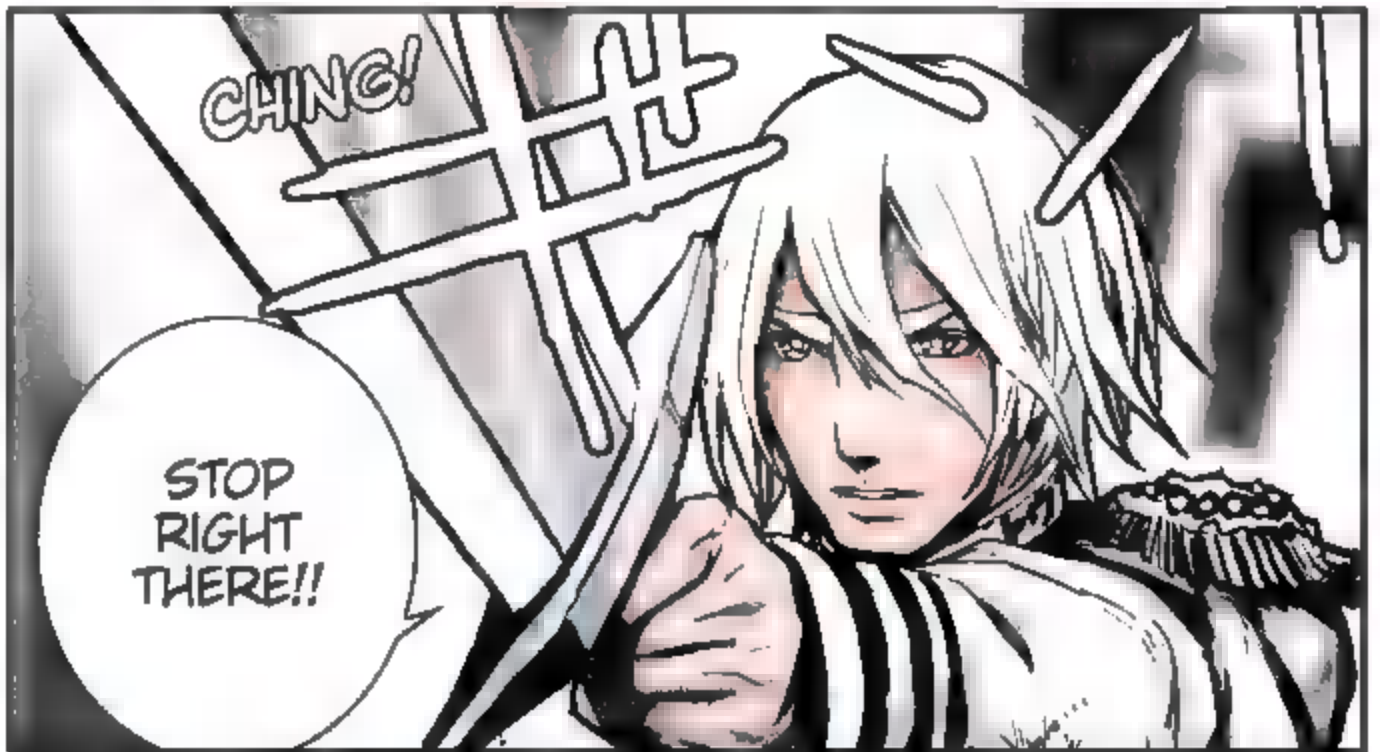


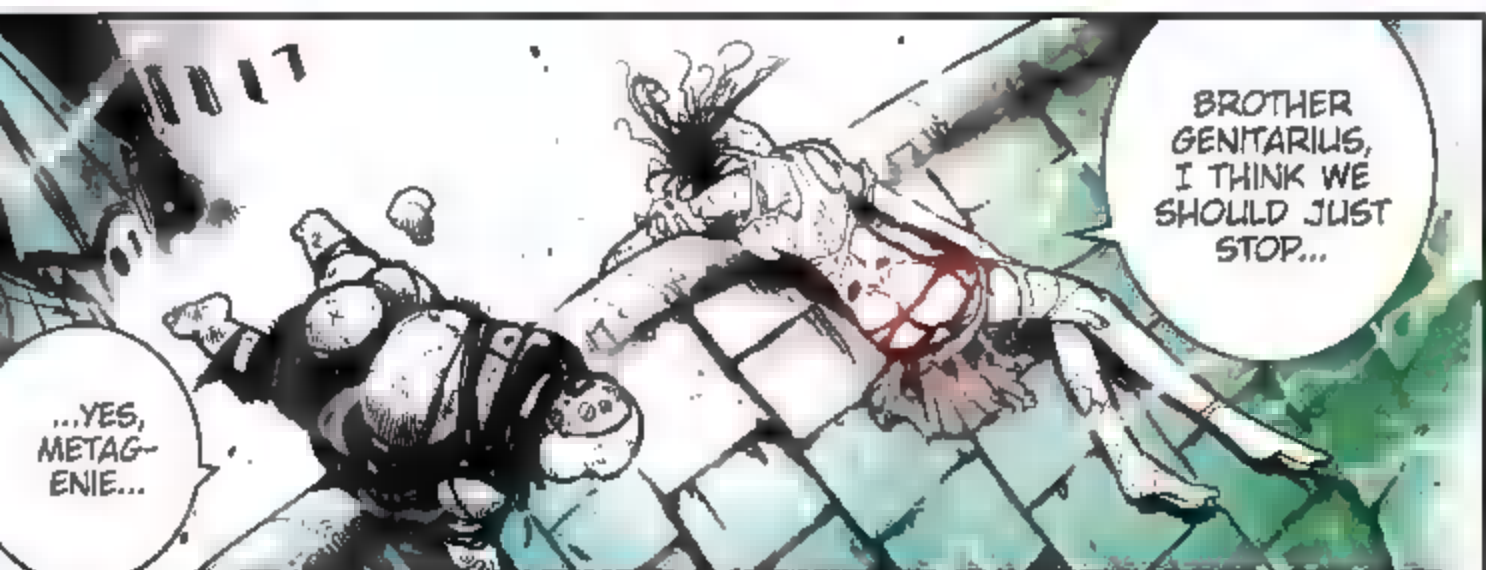




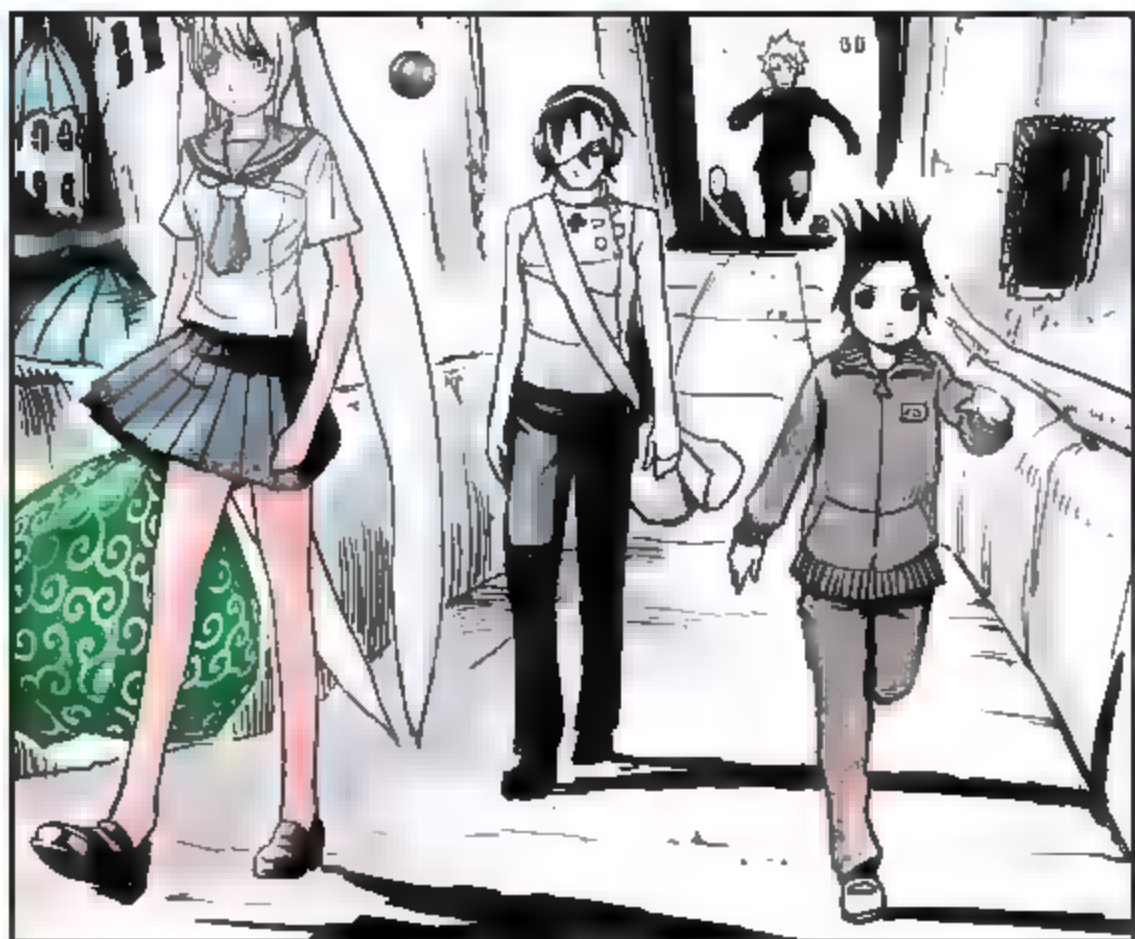








*SYMBOL: BLAME



05

PACKAGE

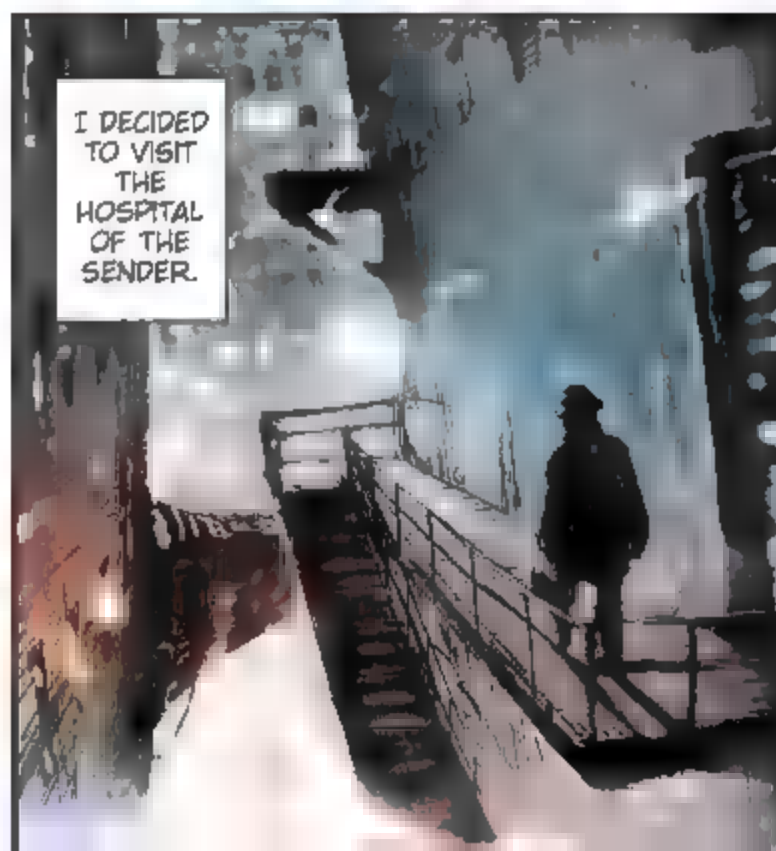




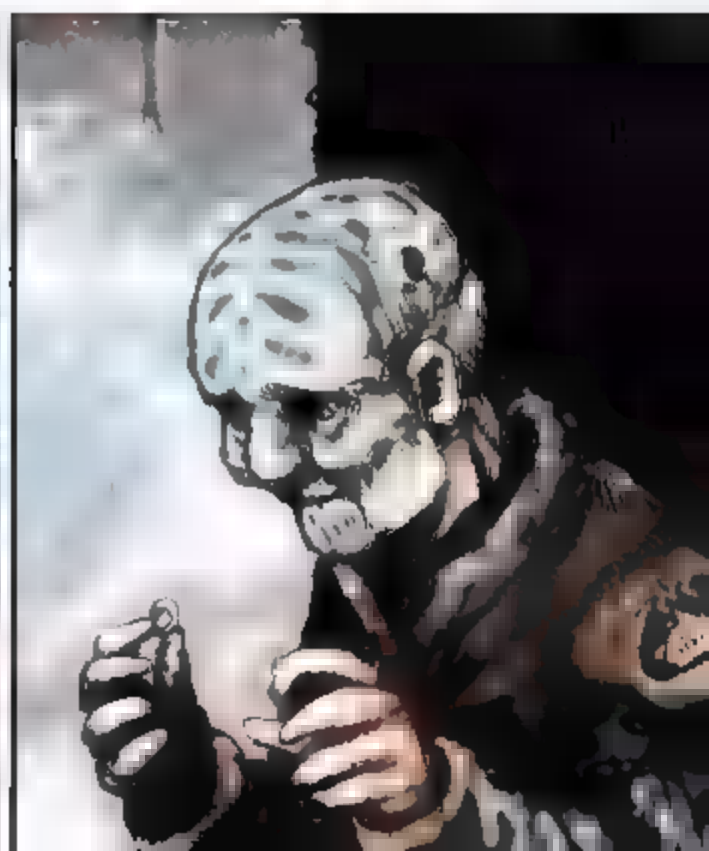
A
PACKAGE
ARRIVED
FOR MY
BROTHER.

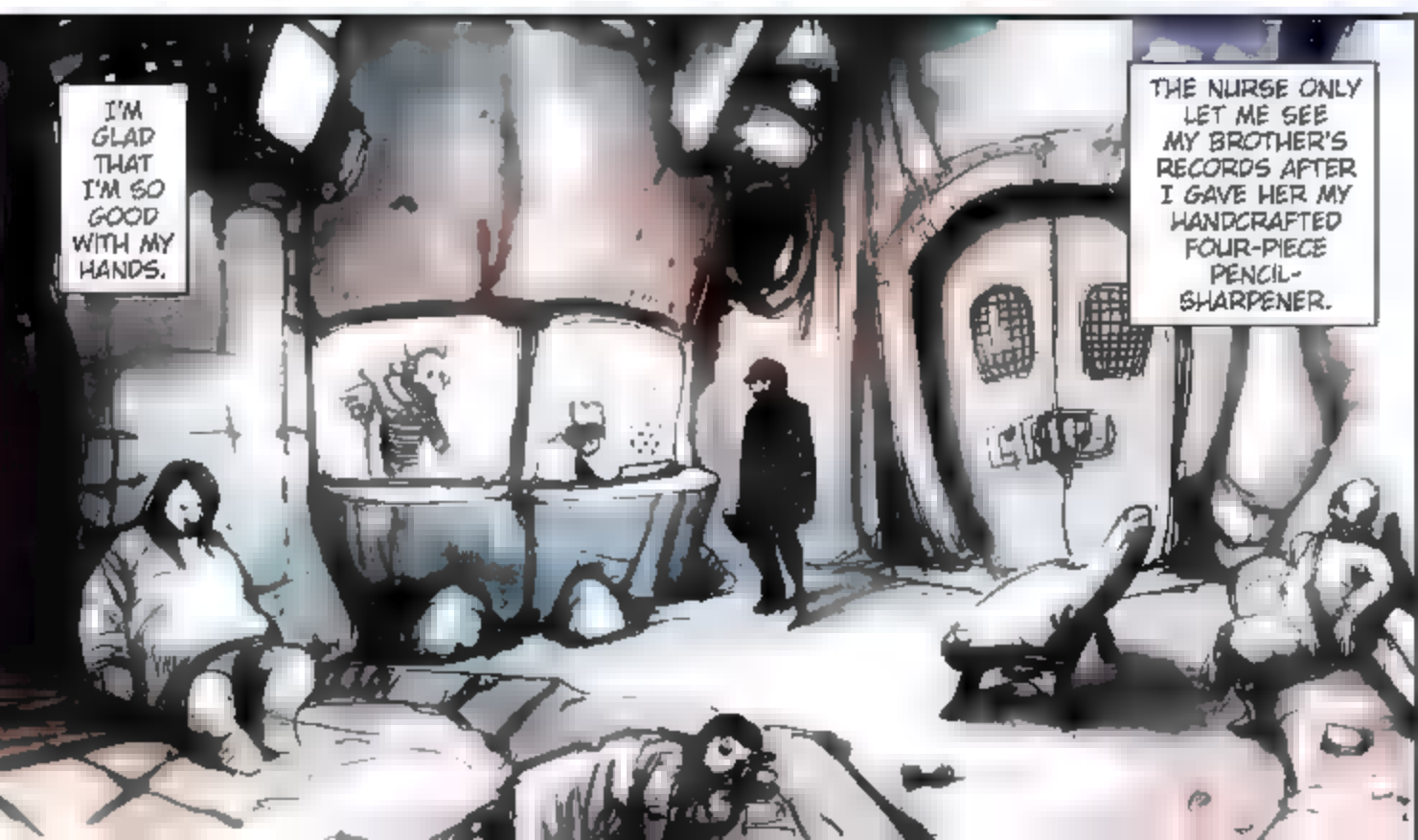
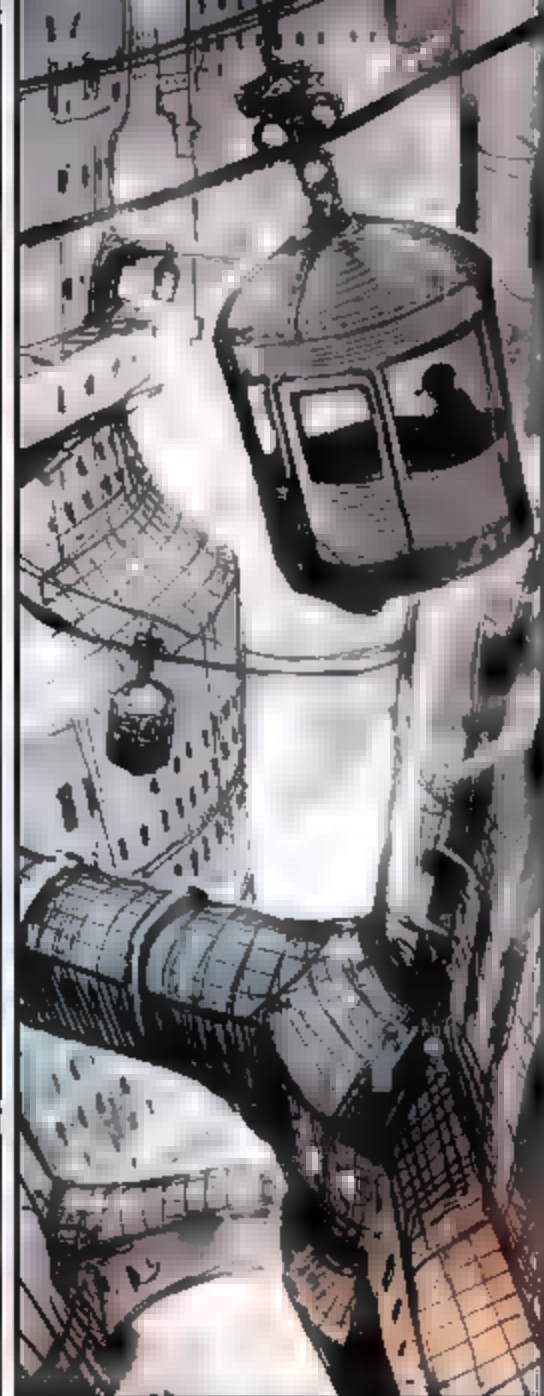


BUT HE LEFT
THE FAMILY
FORTY YEARS
AGO, AND
WAS NEVER
HEARD FROM
SINCE.



I DECIDED
TO VISIT
THE
HOSPITAL
OF THE
SENDER.

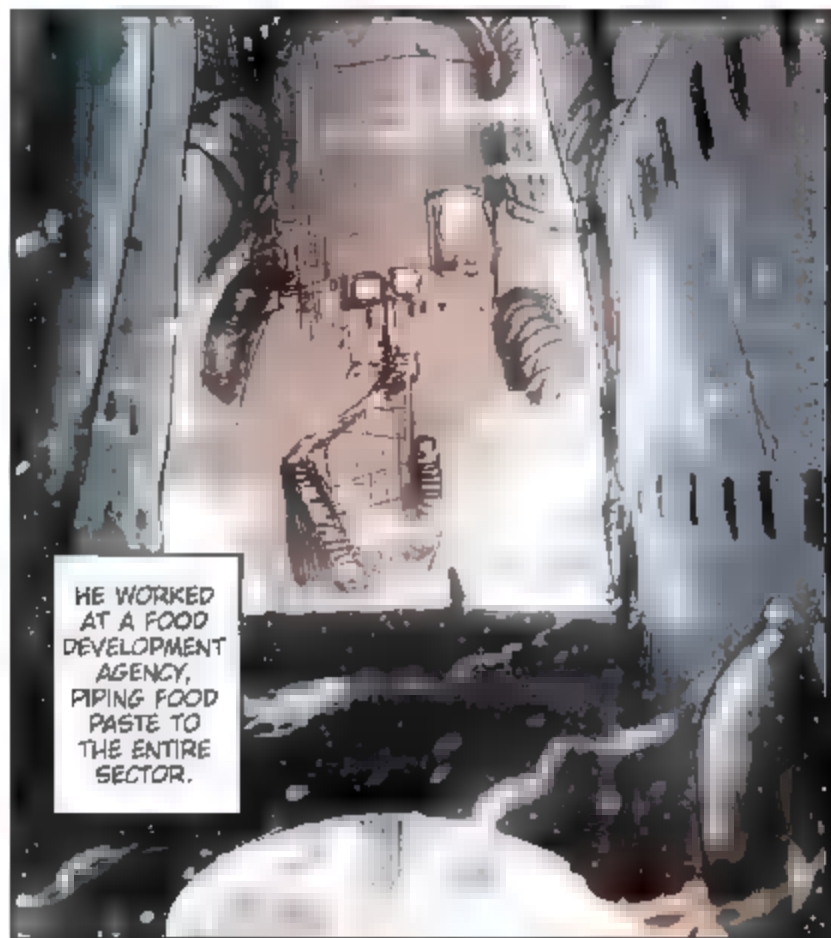




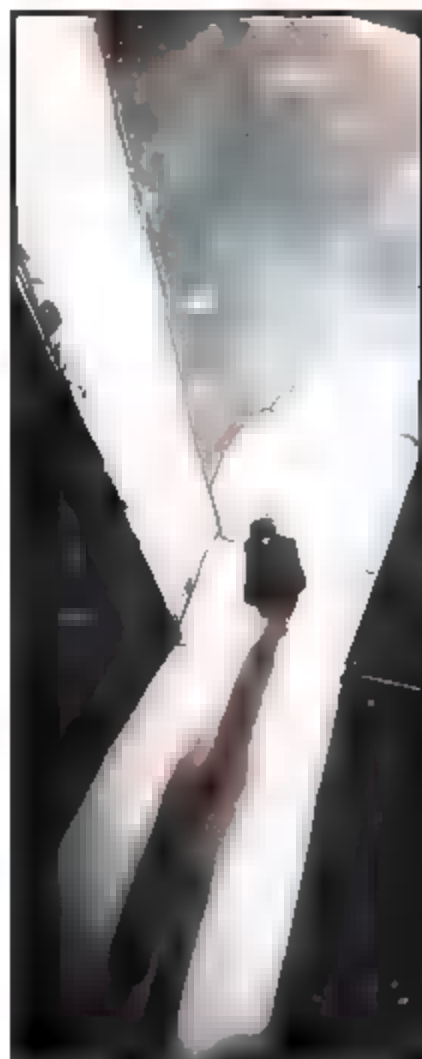
IT
WAS ON
THE VERY
BOTTOM
FLOOR OF
A DISTANT
SECTOR.

I'M
GLAD
THAT
I'M SO
GOOD
WITH MY
HANDS.

THE NURSE ONLY
LET ME SEE
MY BROTHER'S
RECORDS AFTER
I GAVE HER MY
HANDCRAFTED
FOUR-PIECE
PENCIL-
SHARPENER.



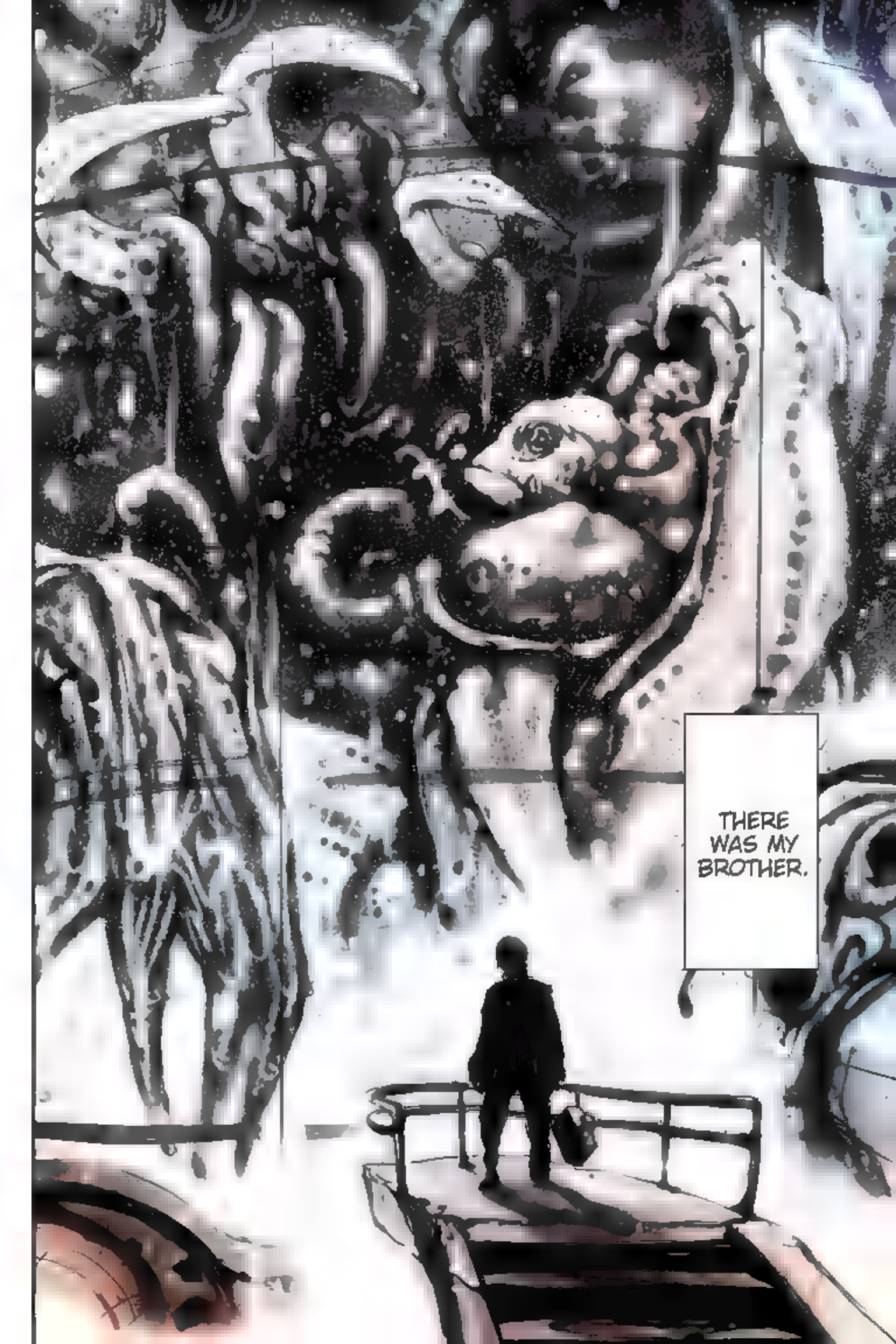
HE WORKED
AT A FOOD
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY,
PIPING FOOD
PASTE TO
THE ENTIRE
SECTOR.



WHAT A
SPLENDID
SYSTEM!!

*FOOD



A black and white illustration with a high-contrast, ink-splattered style. In the foreground, a person in a dark coat stands on a metal bridge or walkway, looking up. The background is dominated by a massive, stylized face with large, expressive eyes and a wide, open mouth. The face appears to be part of a larger, dark, textured structure. The overall mood is surreal and dramatic.

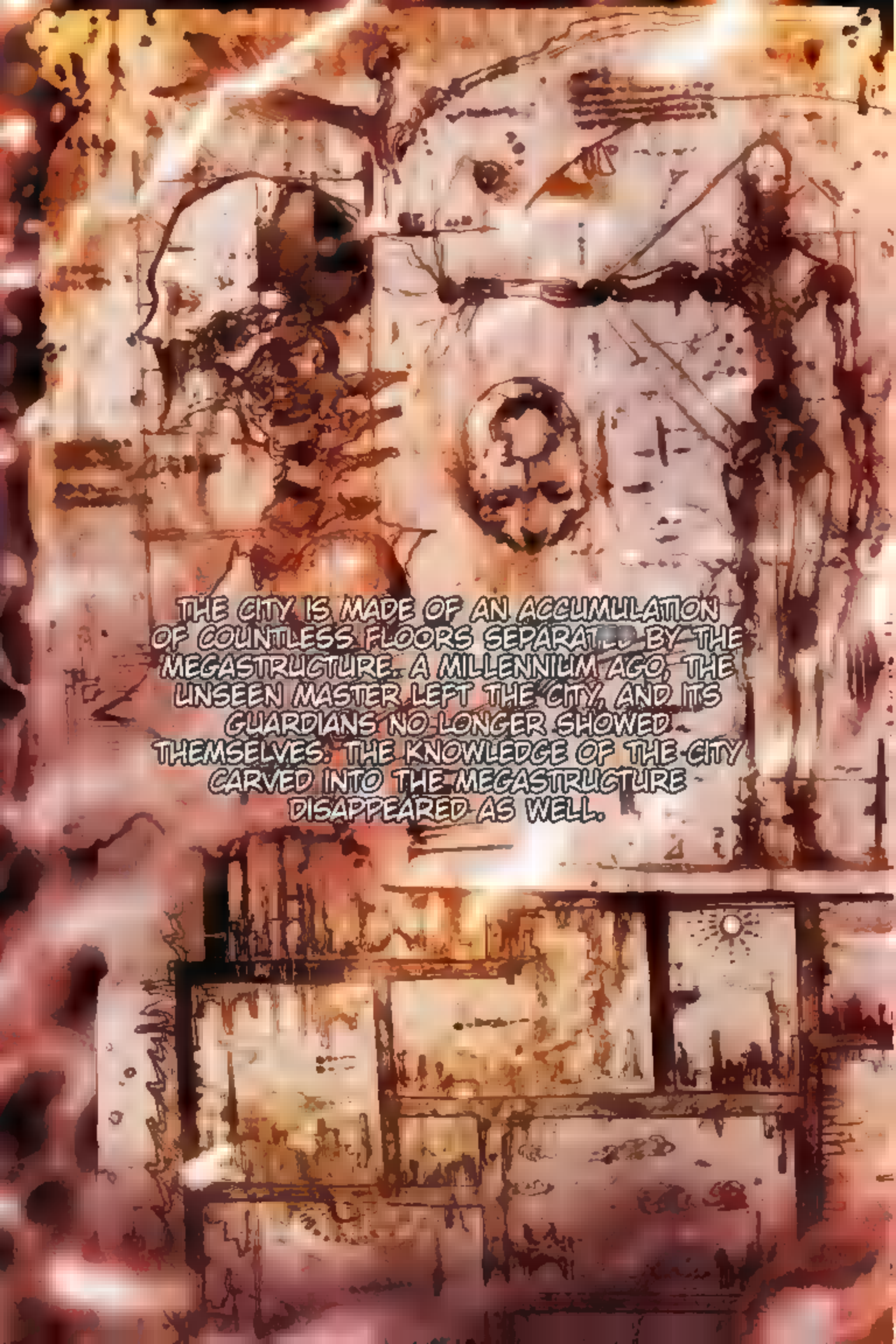
THERE
WAS MY
BROTHER.

05

PACKAGE END

06

NETSPHERE ENGINEER

The background of the page is a dark, textured illustration. At the top, a large, stylized face is visible, composed of various mechanical and organic-looking parts, with a prominent circular eye. Below this, the text is centered. At the bottom, there's a depiction of a cityscape with buildings and a sun or moon in the sky, all rendered in a dark, sketchy style.

THE CITY IS MADE OF AN ACCUMULATION
OF COUNTLESS FLOORS SEPARATED BY THE
MEGASTRUCTURE. A MILLENNIUM AGO, THE
UNSEEN MASTER LEFT THE CITY, AND ITS
GUARDIANS NO LONGER SHOWED
THEMSELVES. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CITY
CARVED INTO THE MEGASTRUCTURE
DISAPPEARED AS WELL.





AFTER THE
FOURTEENTH
VICTIM SHOWED UP,
KIJIMA-SAN, WHO
WAS BORN WITH
THE GIFT OF FAR-
SIGHT, SPOTTED AN
EXTERMINATOR
AROUND THE LOW-
EST LEVEL OF THE
FLINGAL ARRAYS.

THEIR
UNMOVING
REMAINS WERE
SPOTTED
EVERY NOW
AND THEN, BUT
HE SAID THIS
ONE LOOKED
FRESHLY-MADE.



WHEN
HIJIKAZE-SAN
THE PREFECT
WAS YOUNG, HE
LIVED IN THE
ROYAL CITY. HE
WAS THE ONLY
ONE IN THE
COLONY WITH A
COMMUNICATIONS
IMPLANT.

AT THE
TIME, THE
PREFECT WAS
RECEIVING
LIFE-
EXTENSION
TREATMENT,
WHICH MEANT
HE KEPT
GROWING.



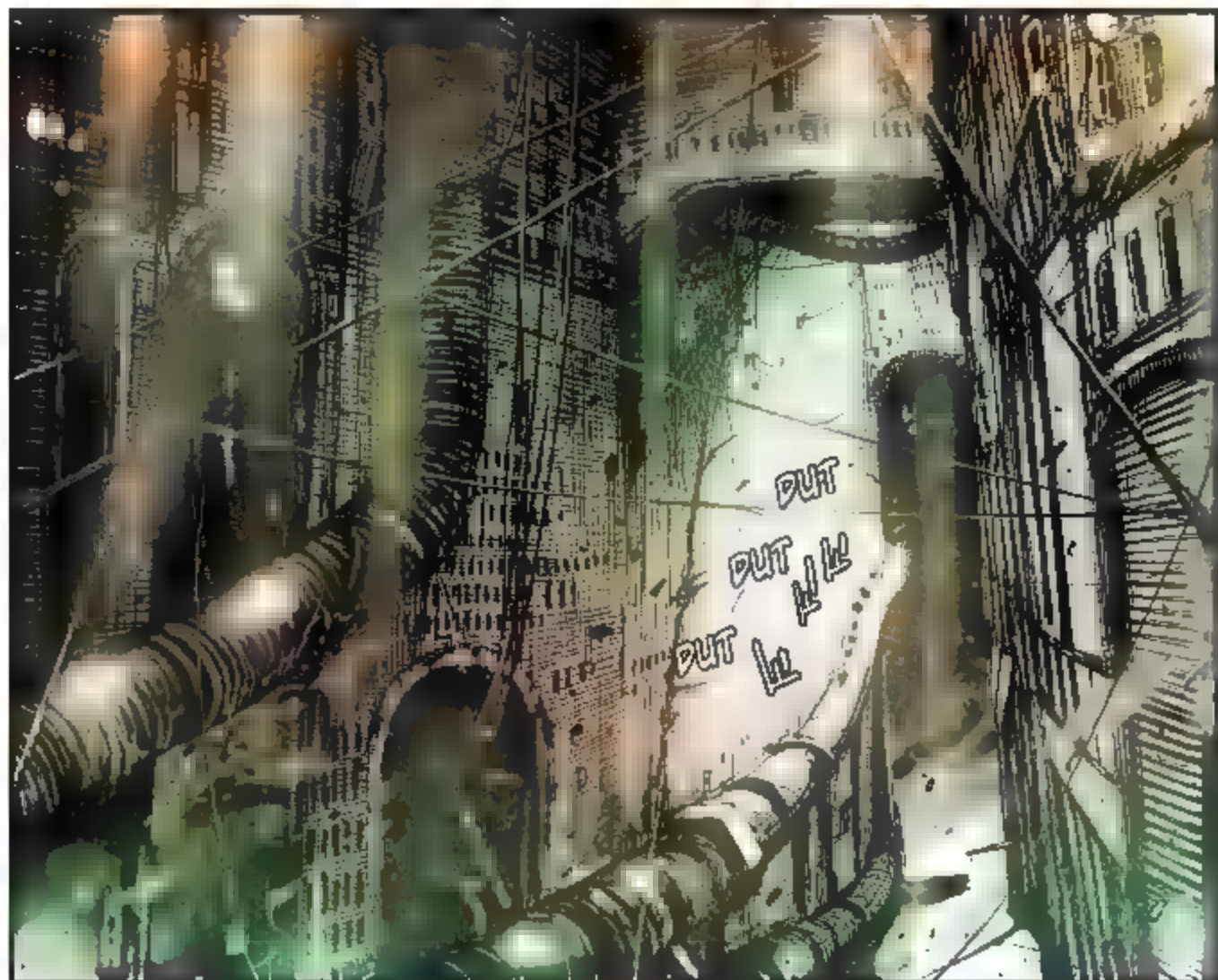
ACCORDING TO
LAW, SUCH AN
OBJECT MUST
BE HANDED
OVER TO
CENTRAL IF
DISCOVERED.

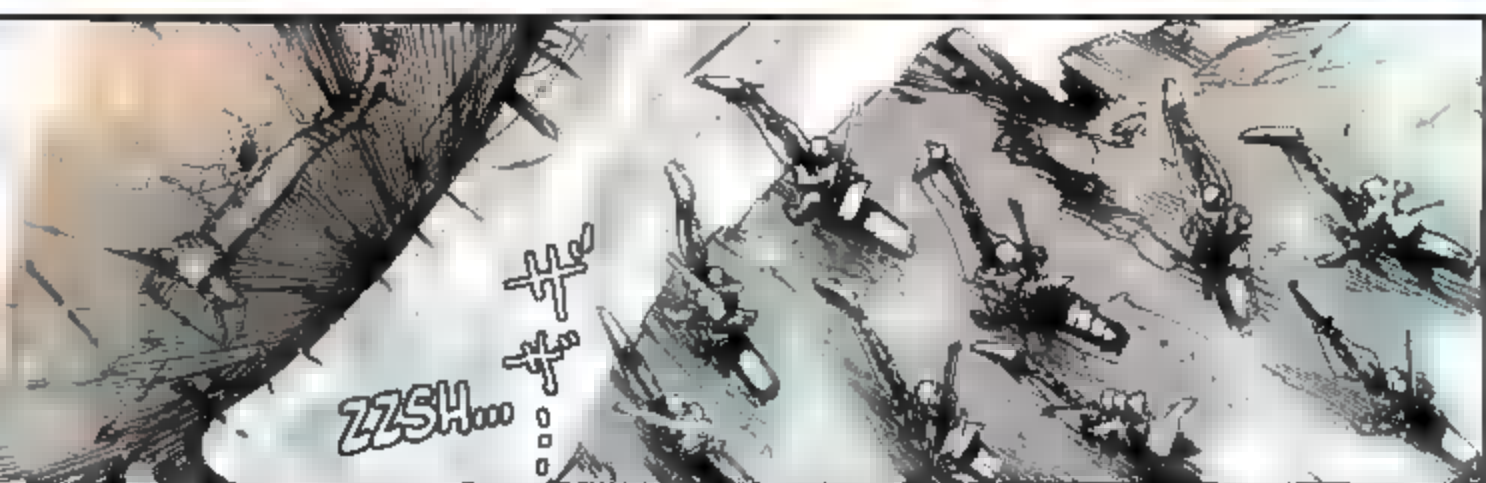


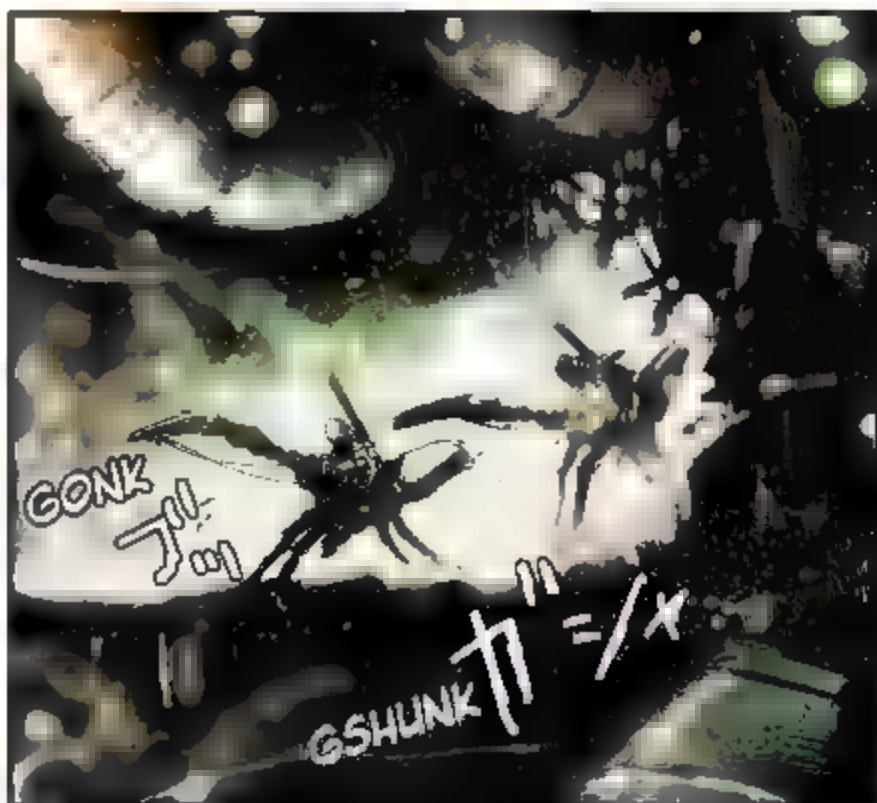
SO ON
THAT DAY,
HE SENT A
MESSAGE TO
THE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT.

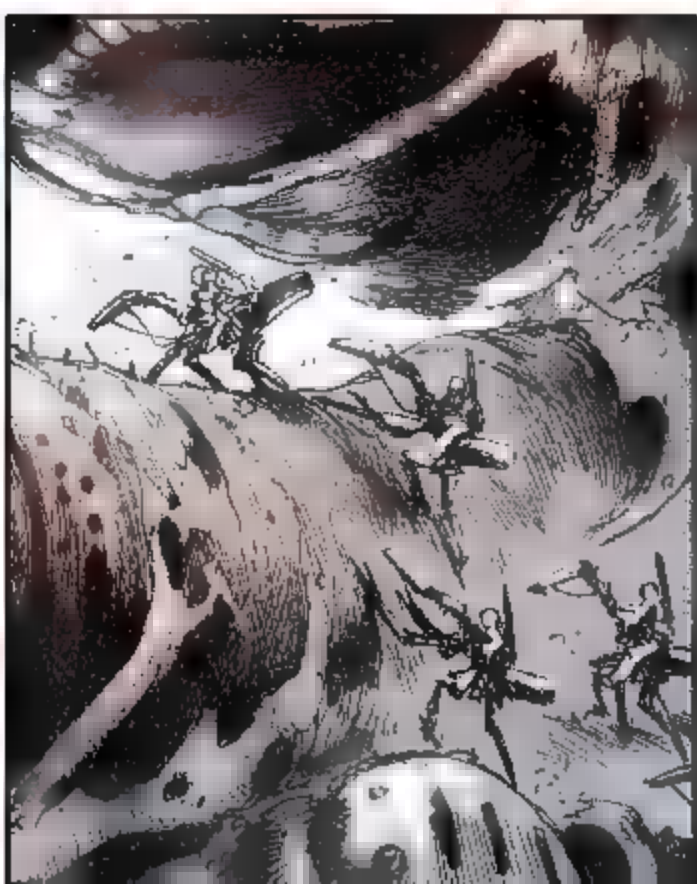
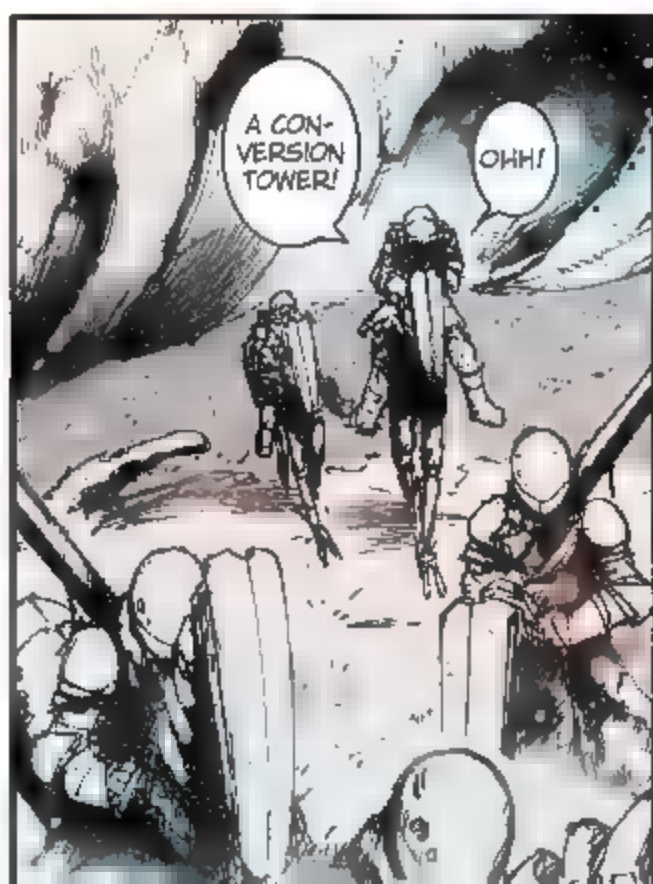


IT IS CLEAR
THAT THIS IS
BEYOND OUR
CAPABILITY.

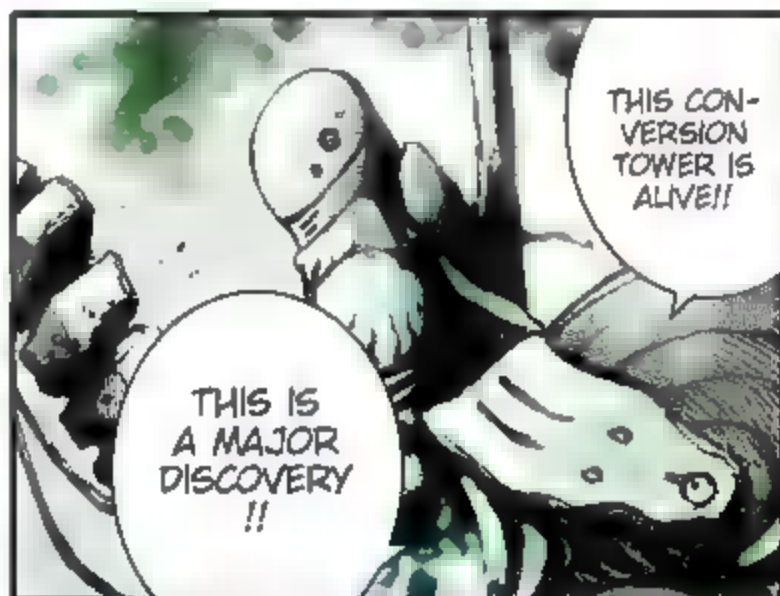


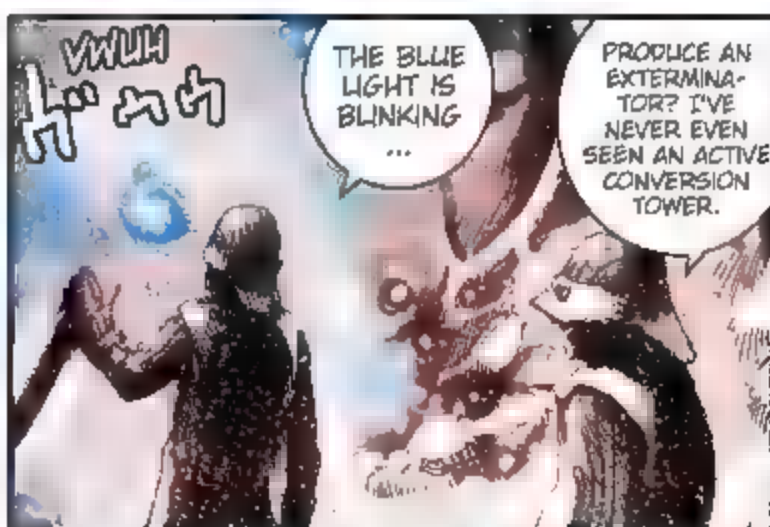
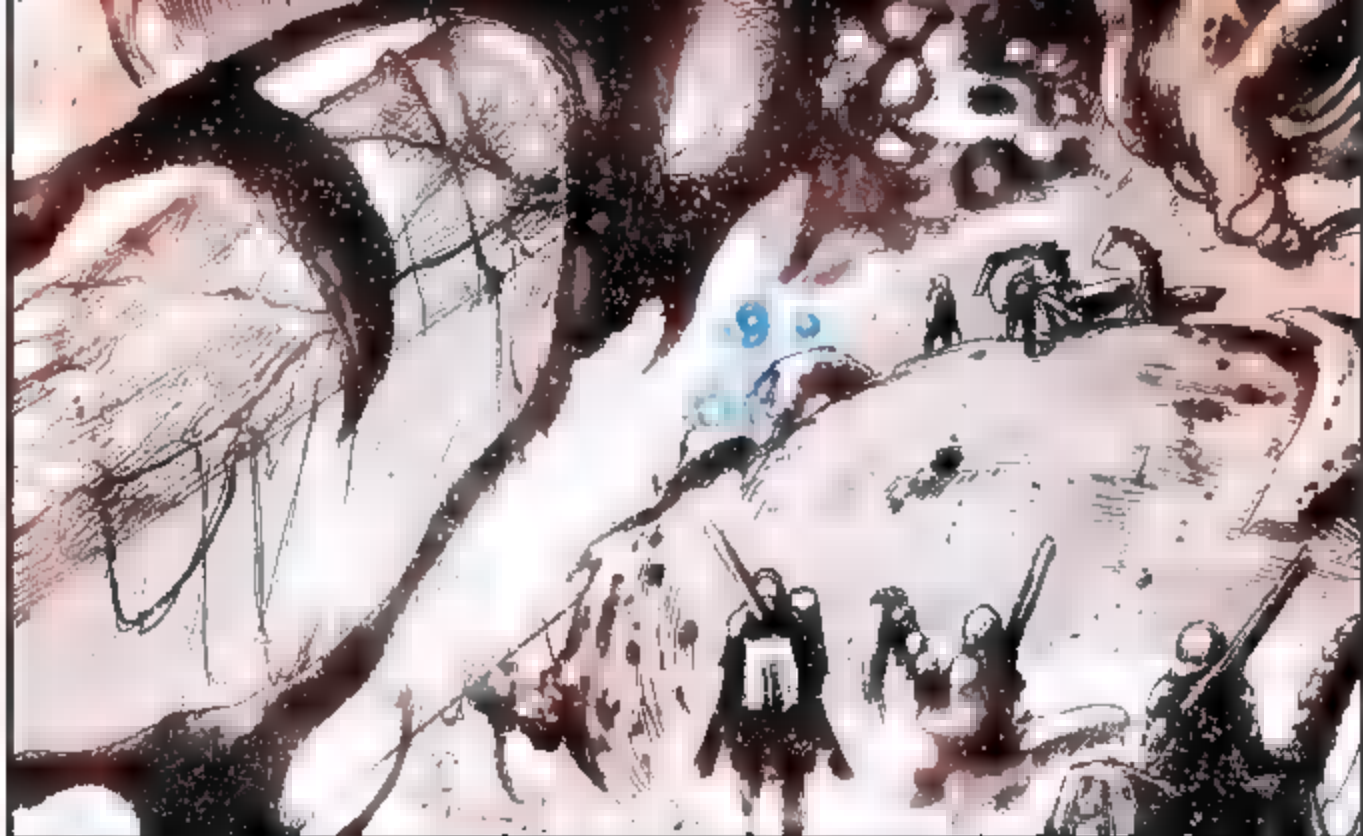


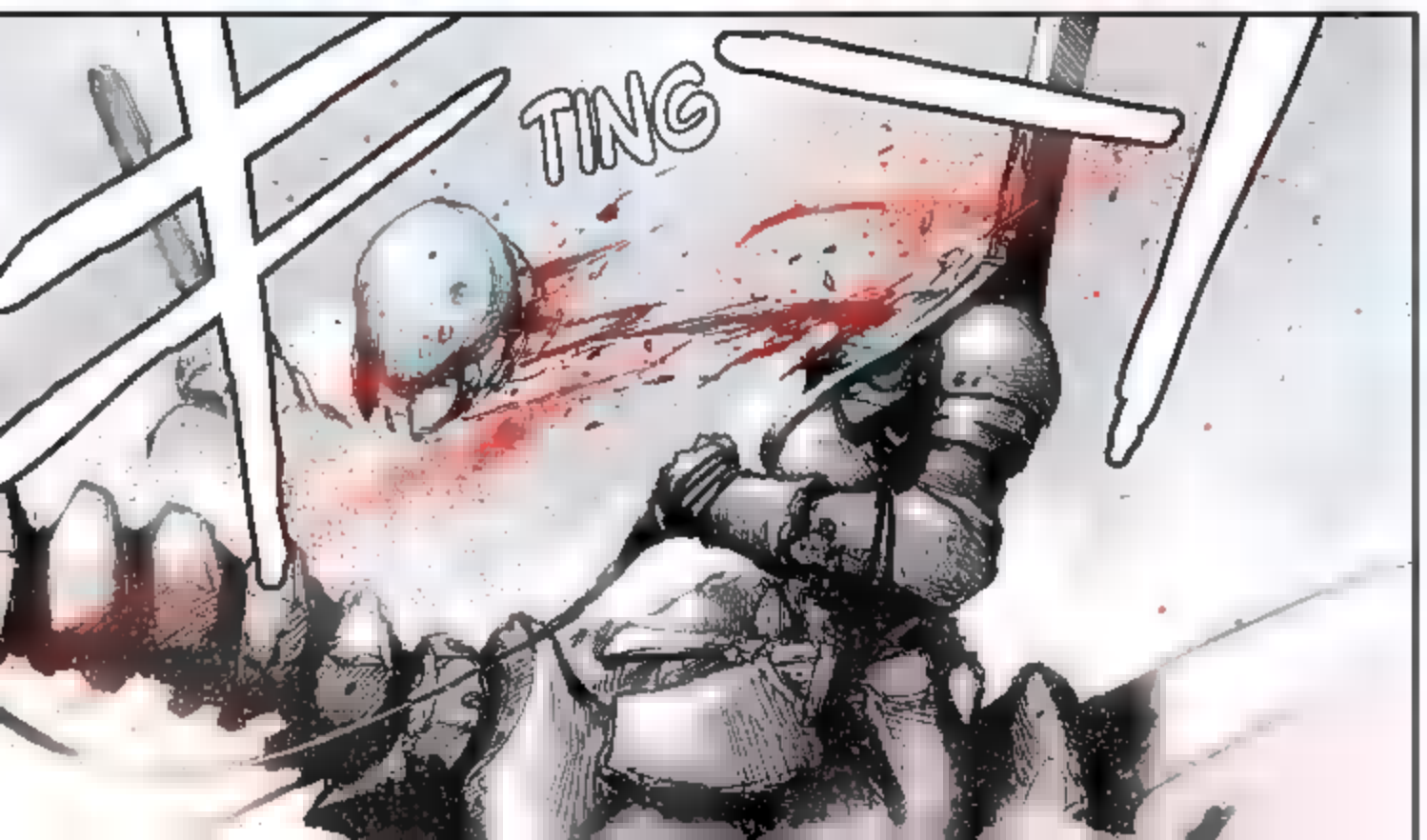


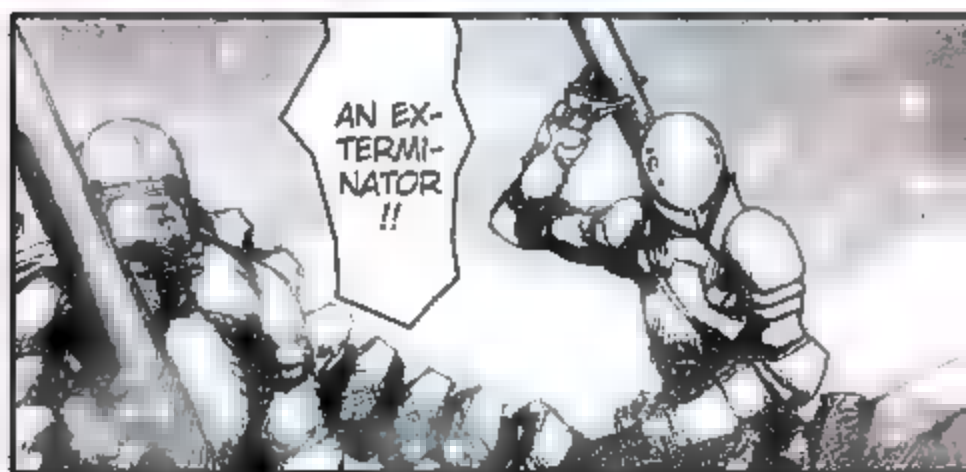
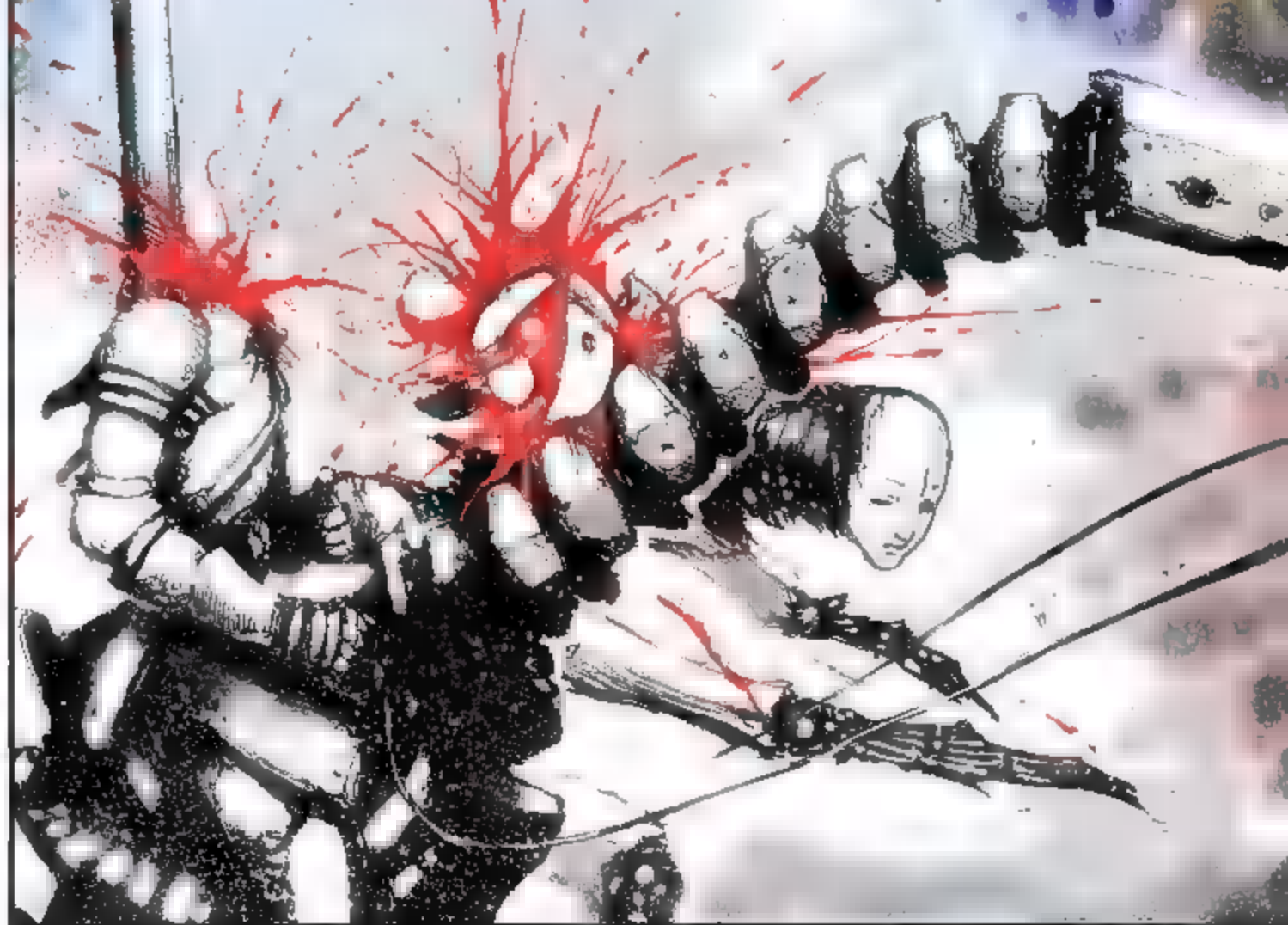


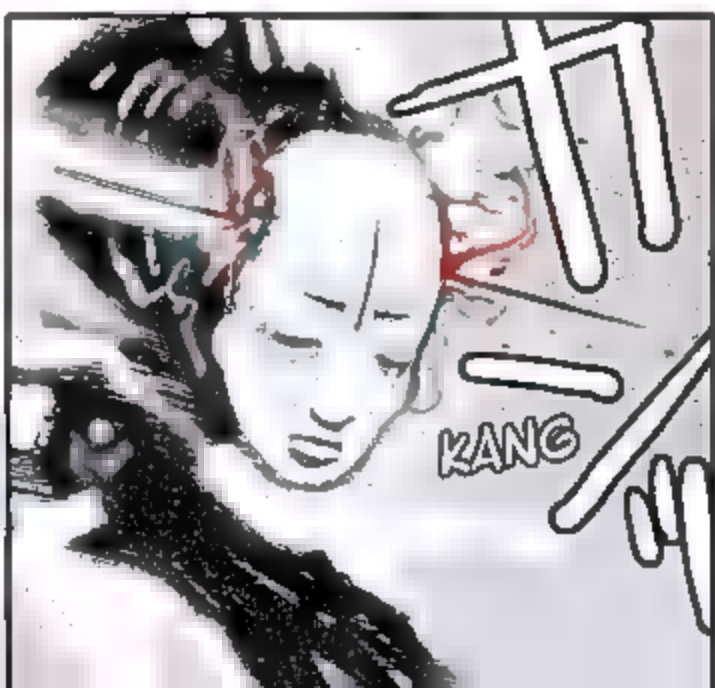
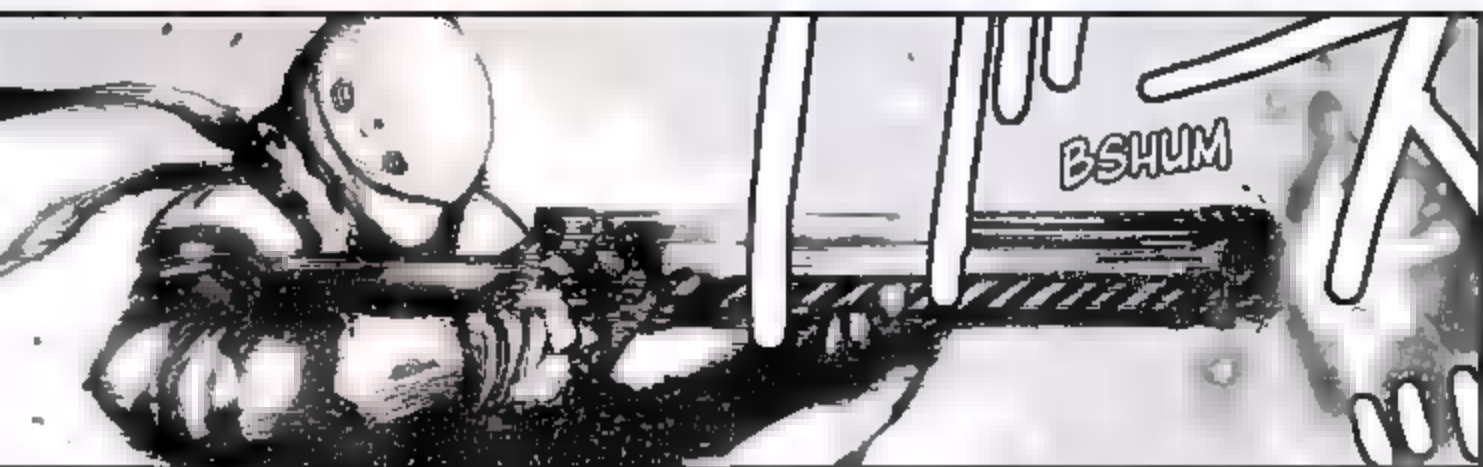


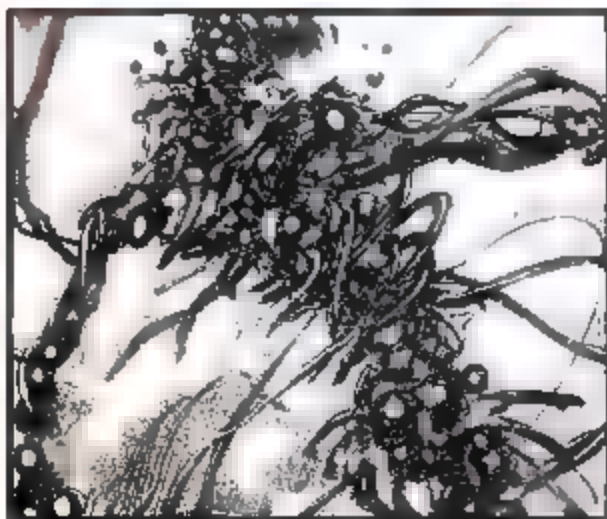
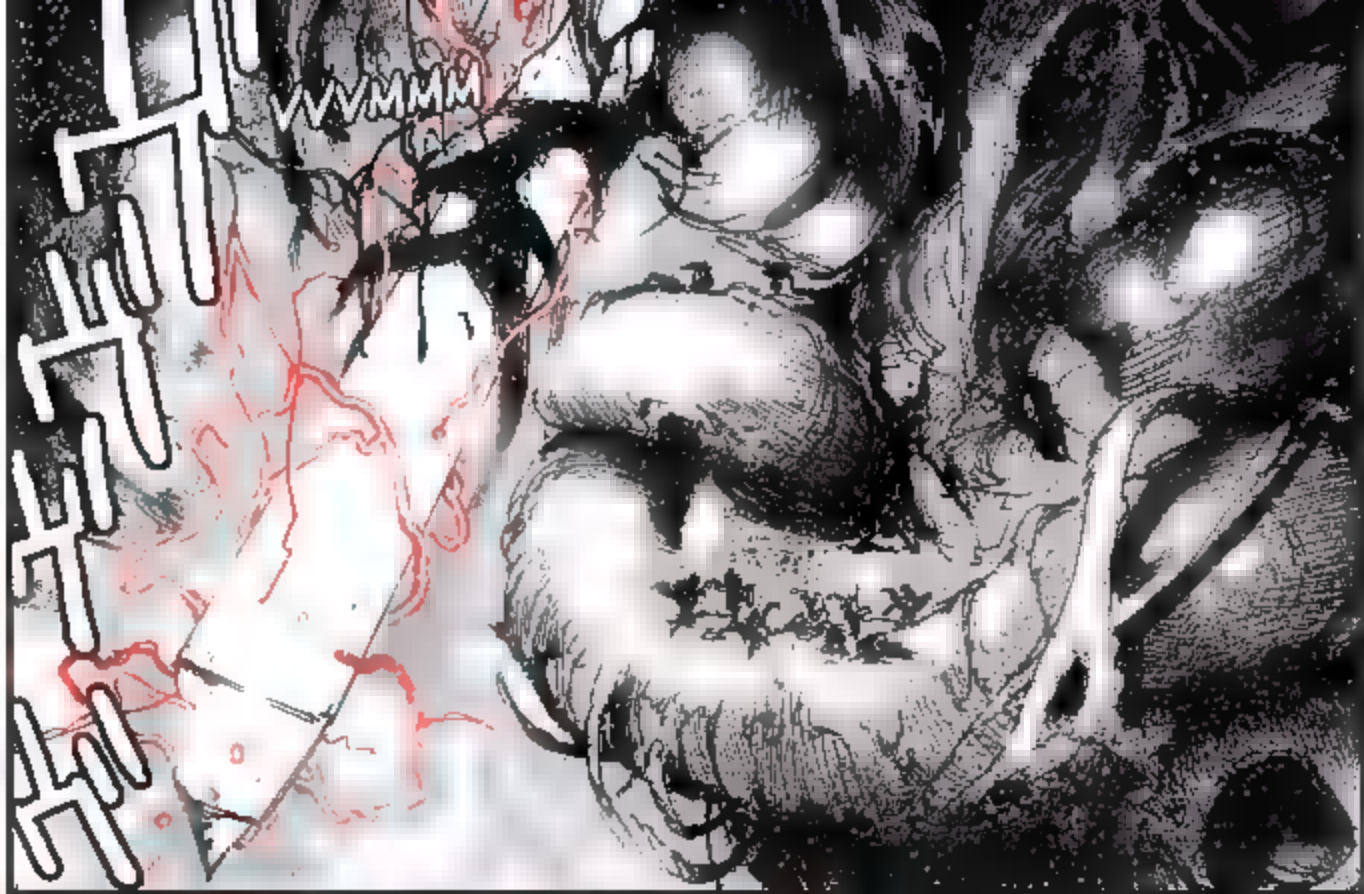




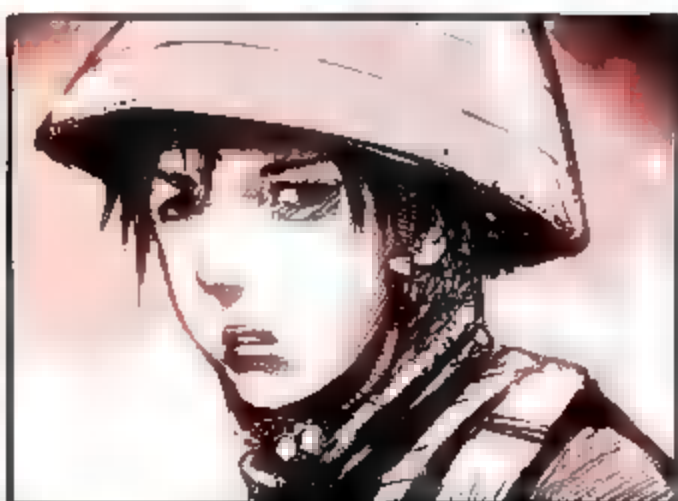
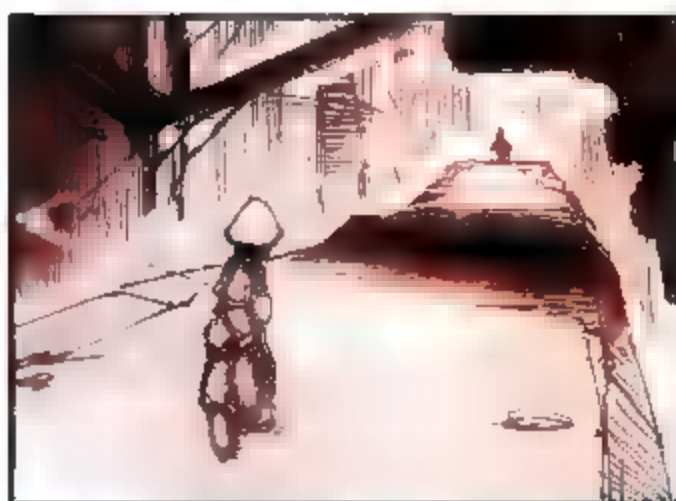
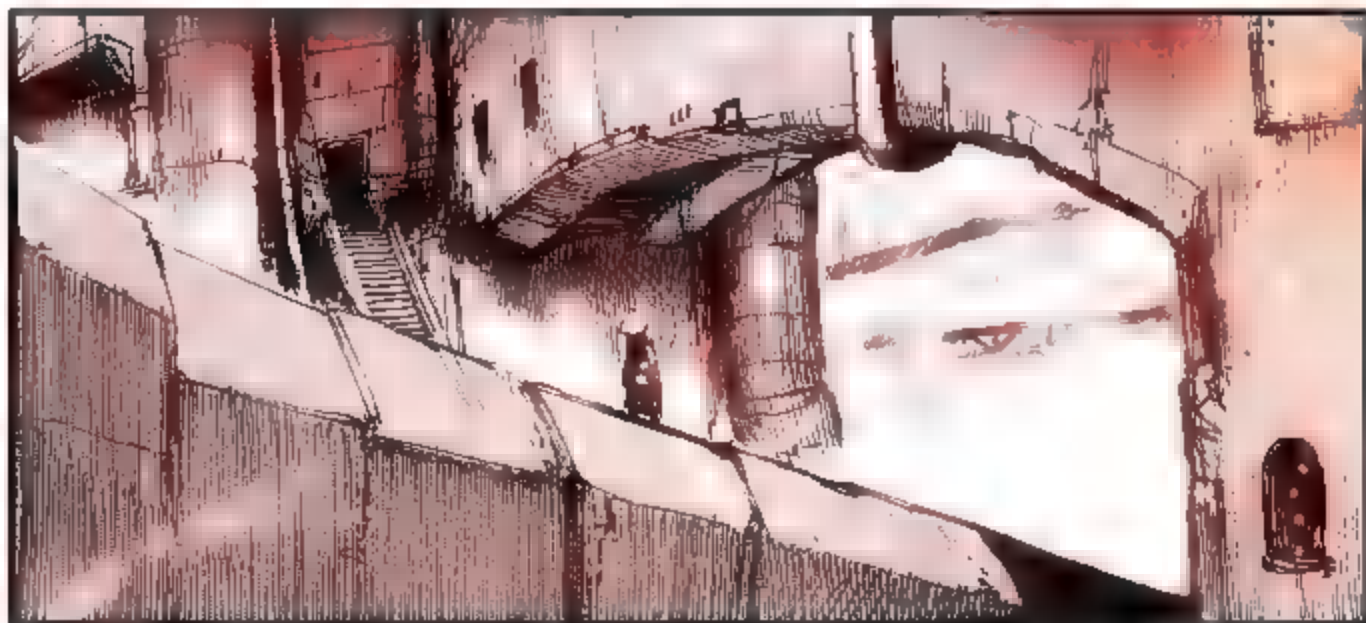


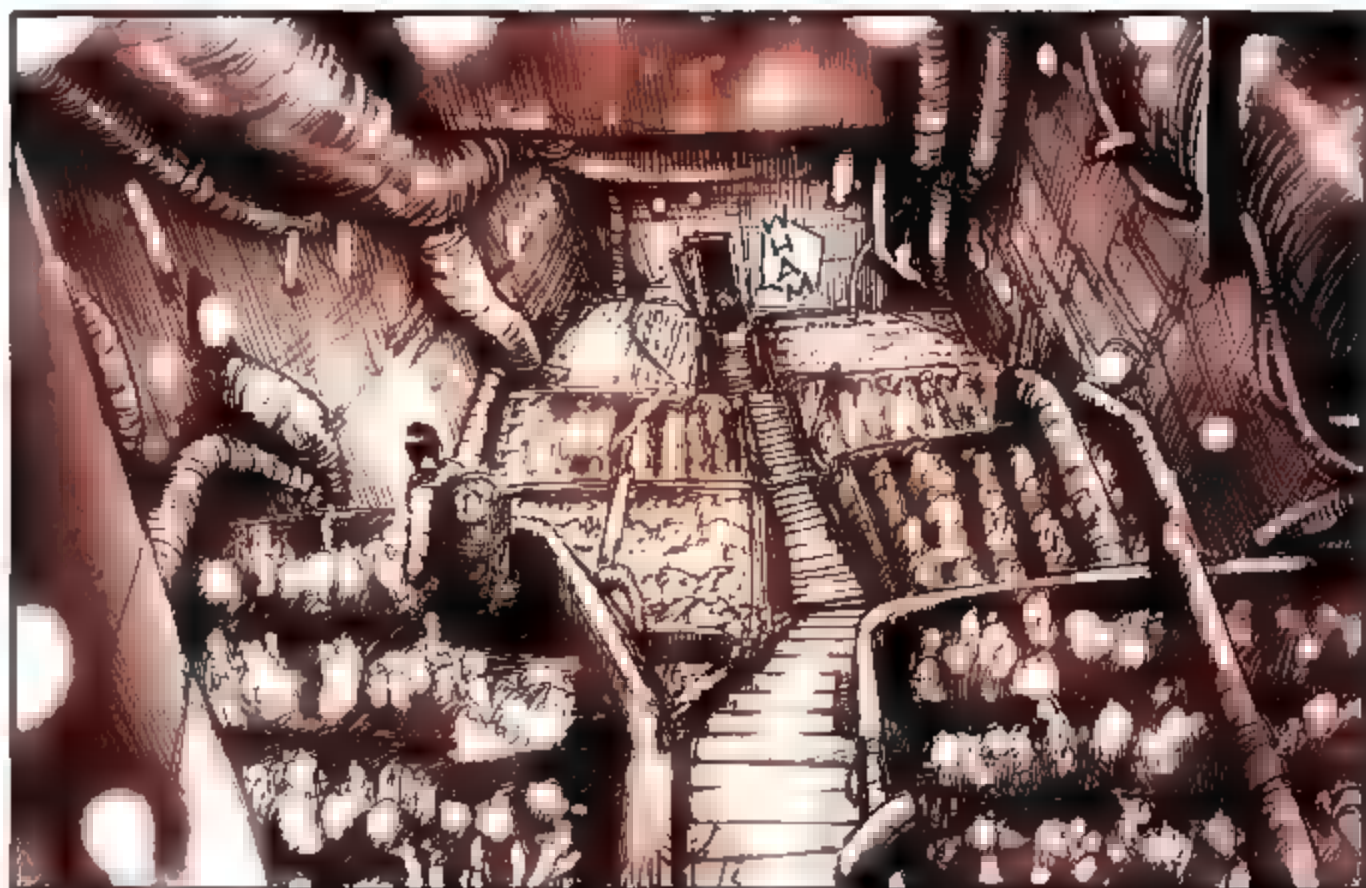
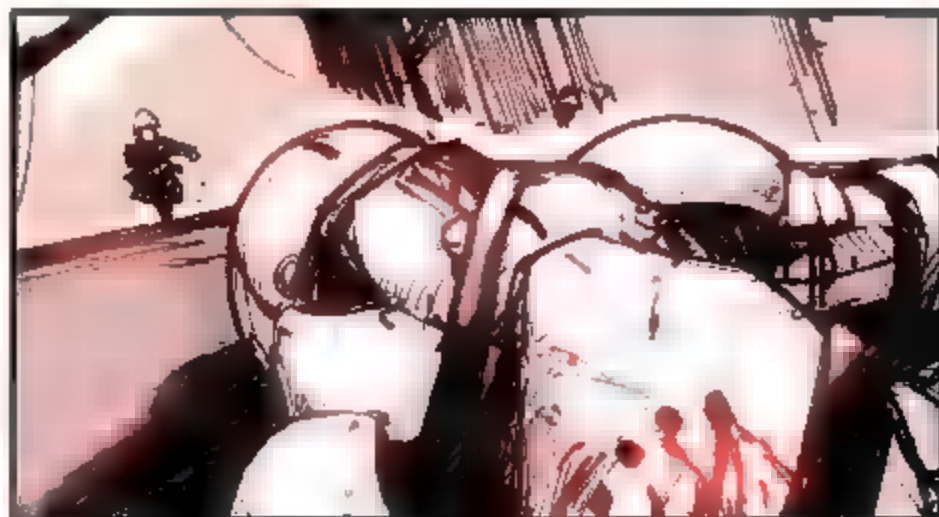


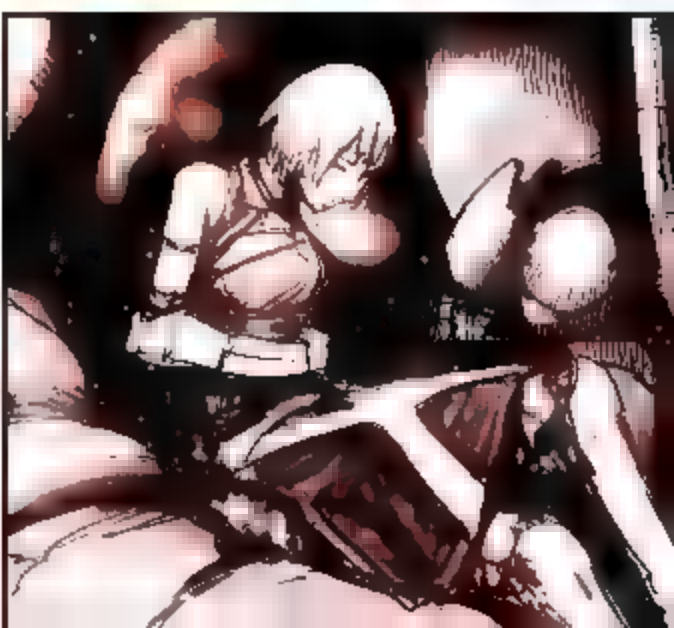
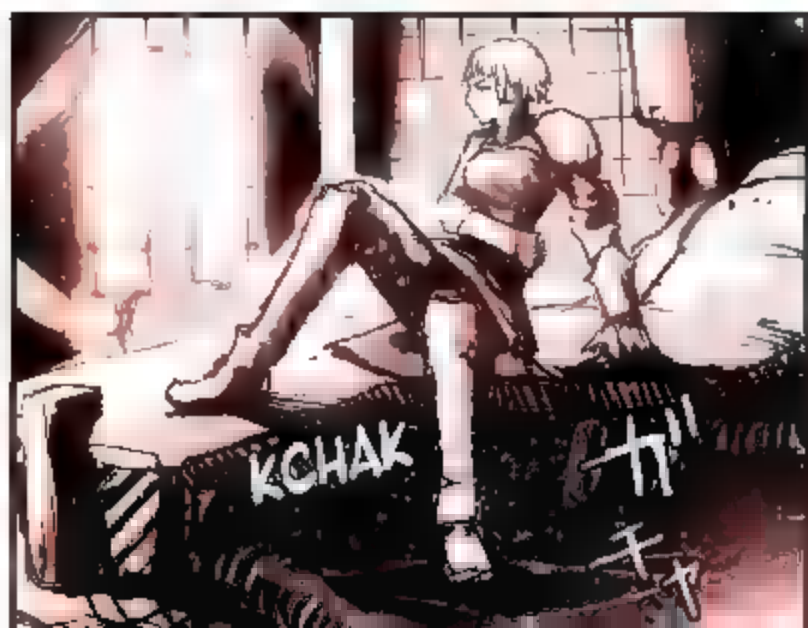


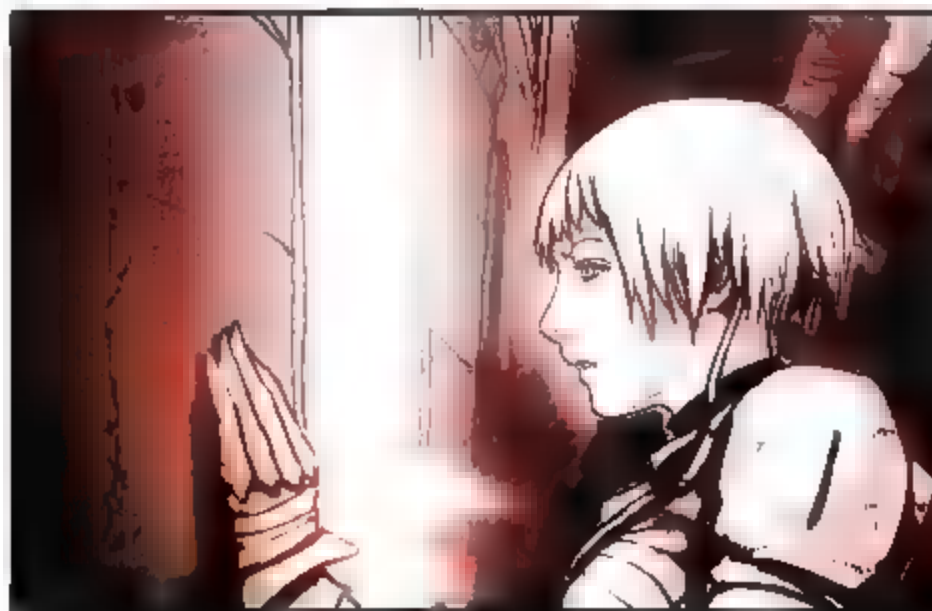
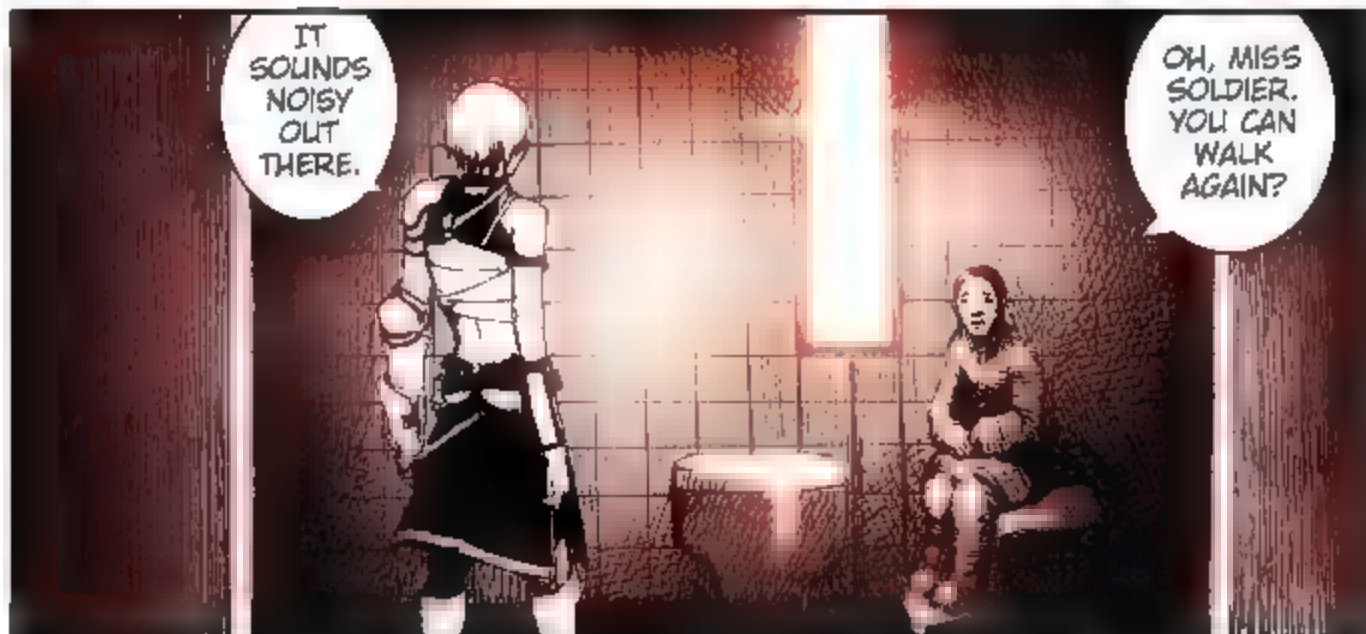
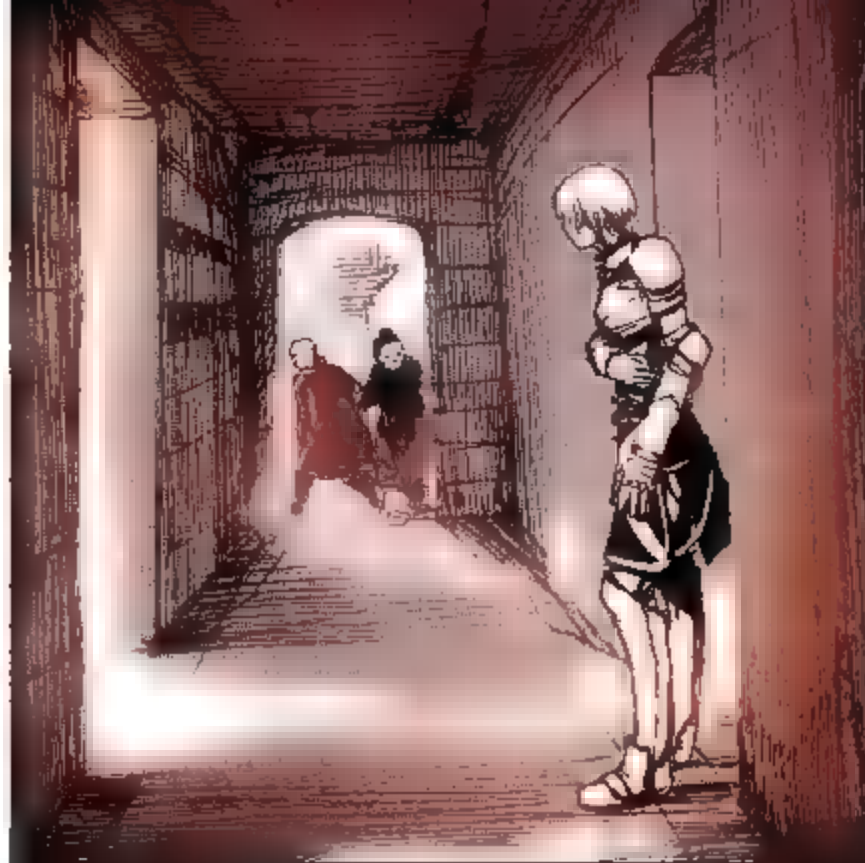
















WELL,
WELL...
WHO ARE
YOU?

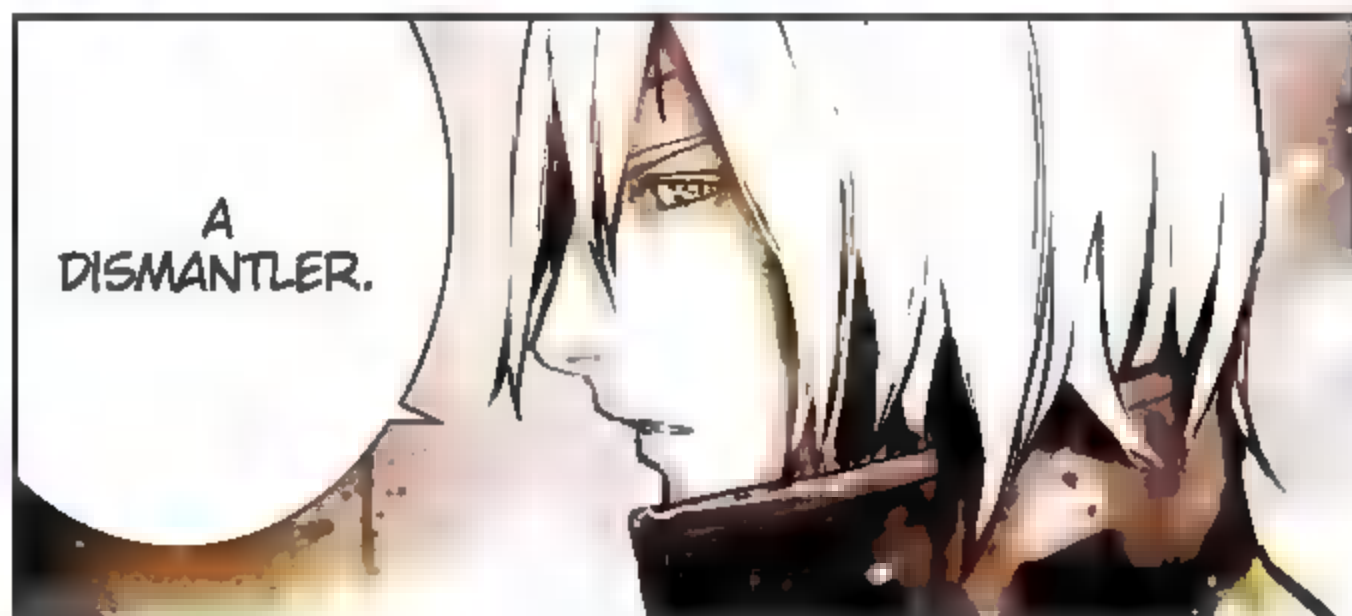
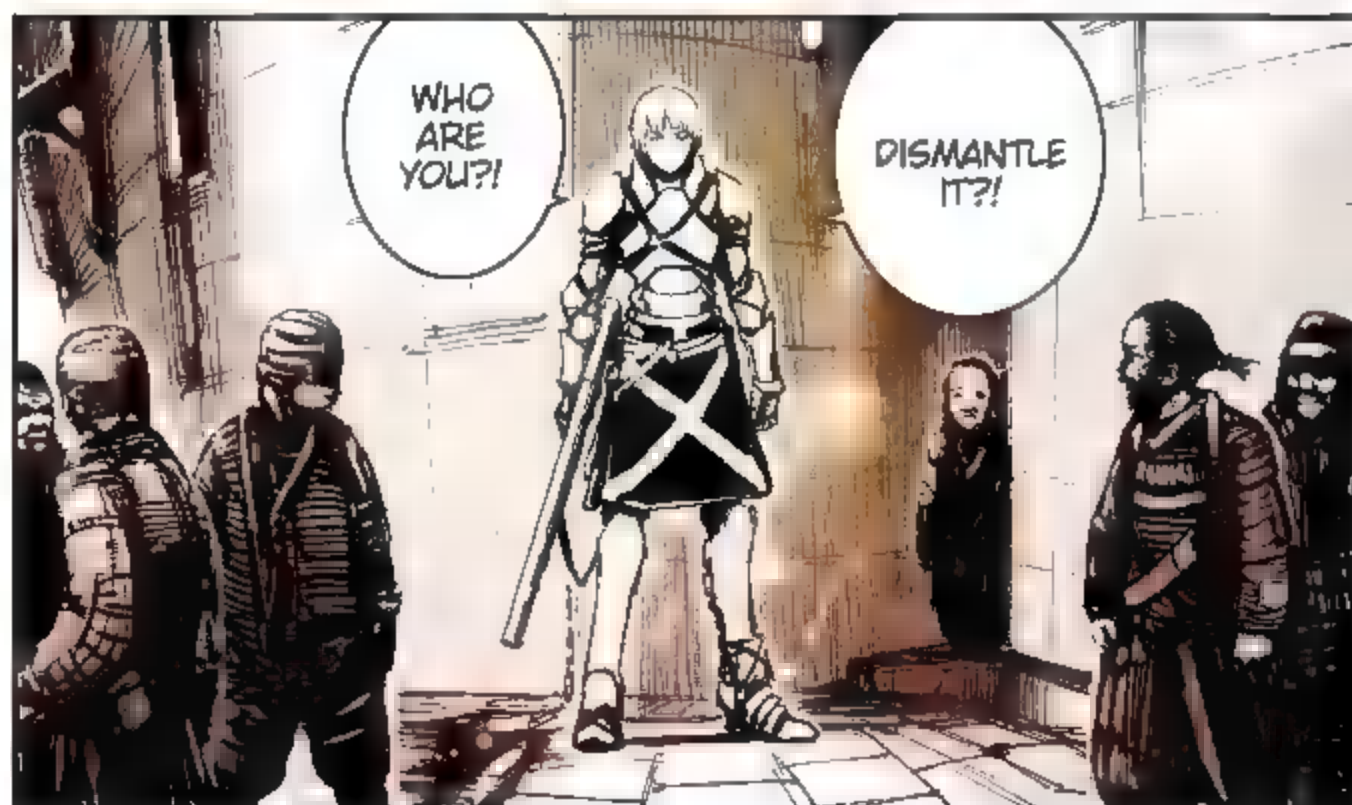
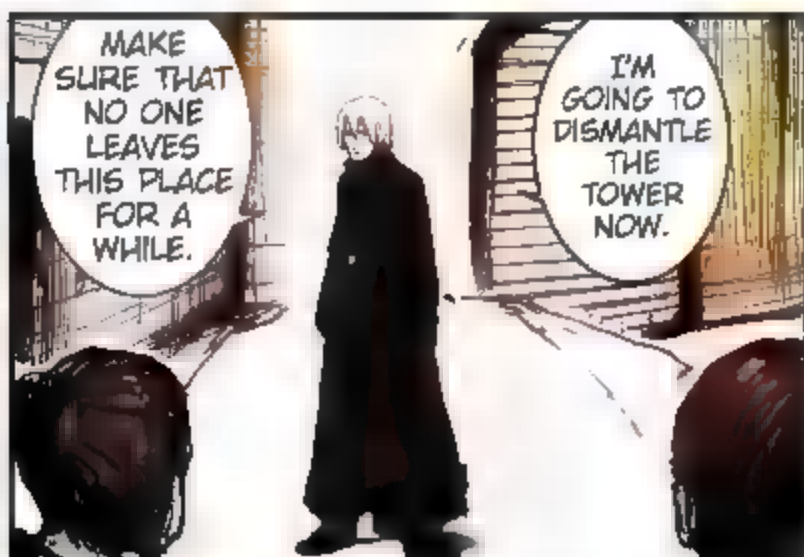


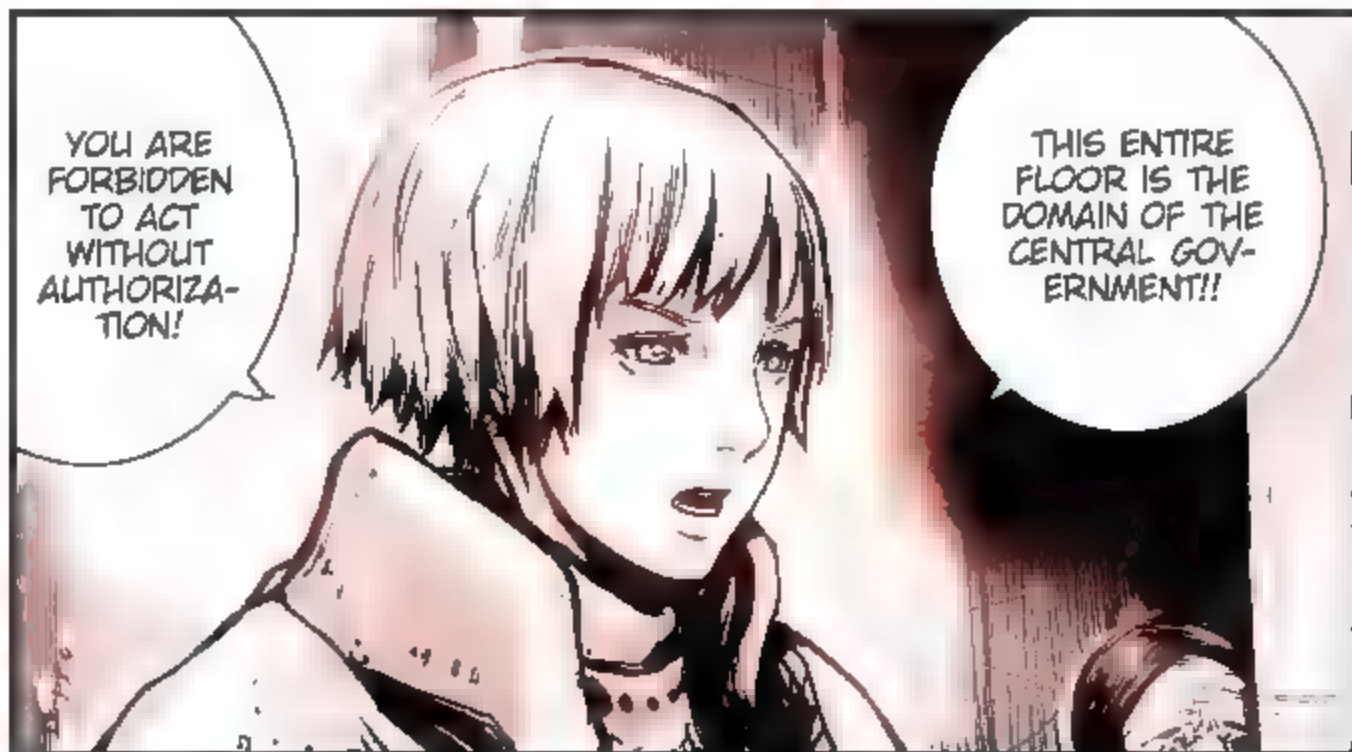
I
RECEIVED A
MESSAGE THAT
EXTERMINATORS
WERE SEEN
HERE.

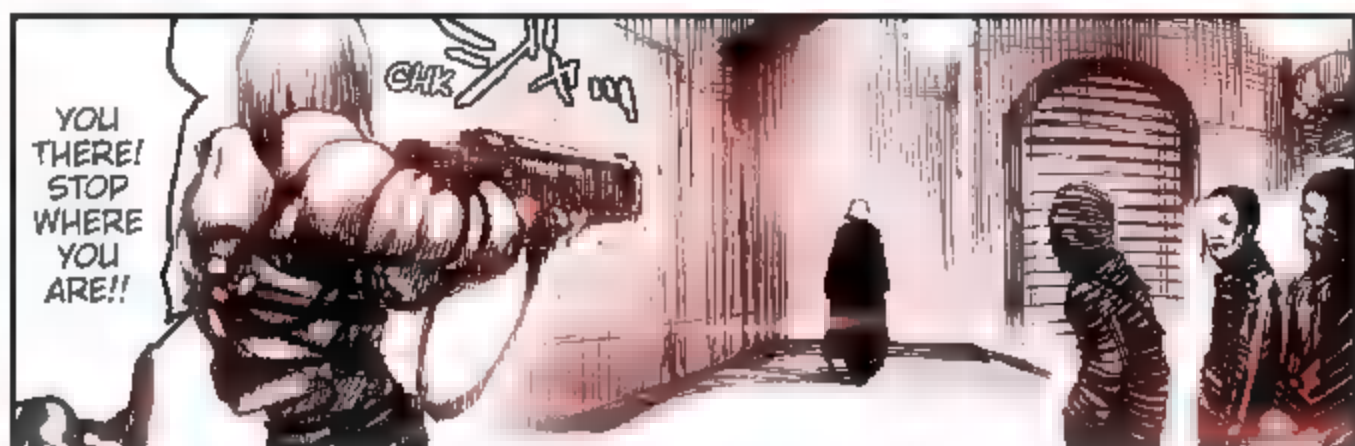
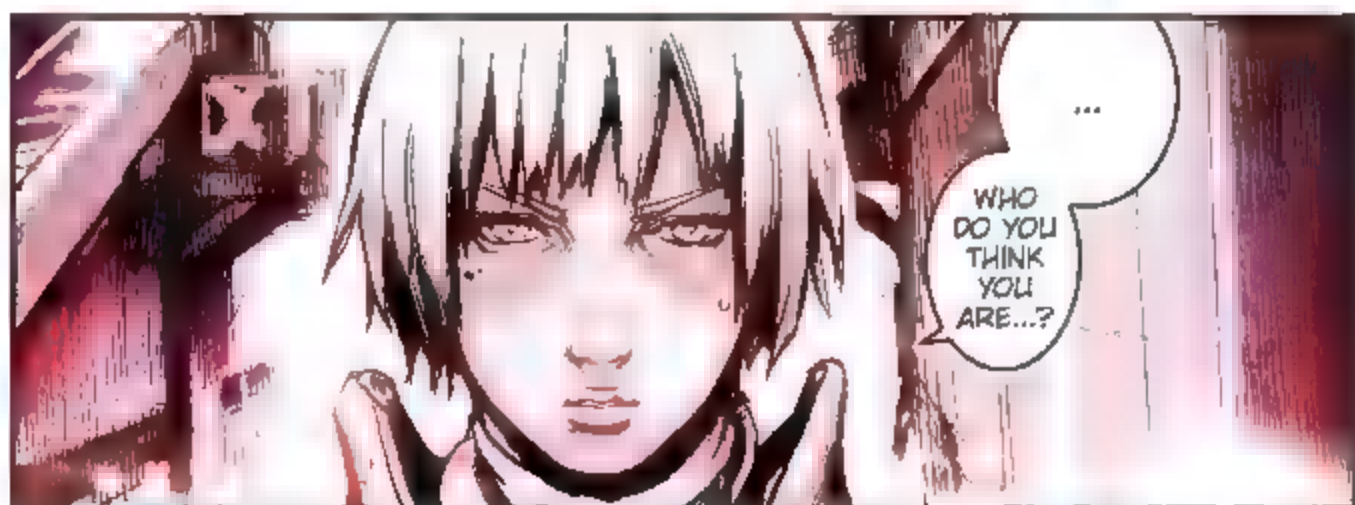
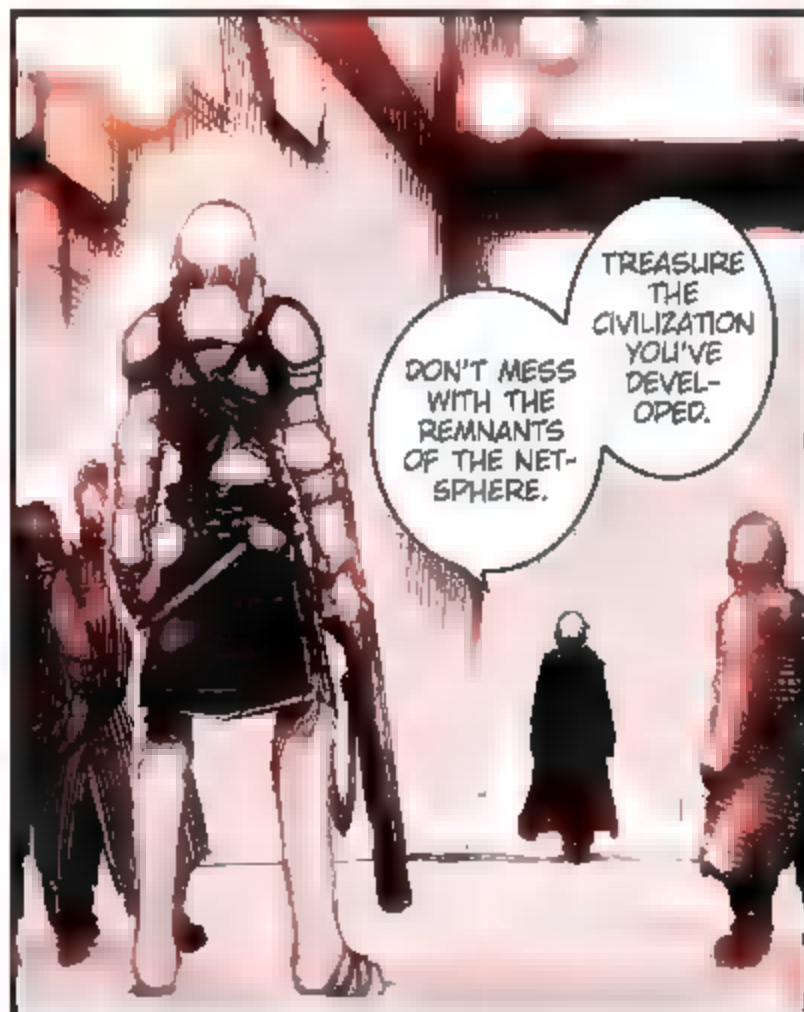


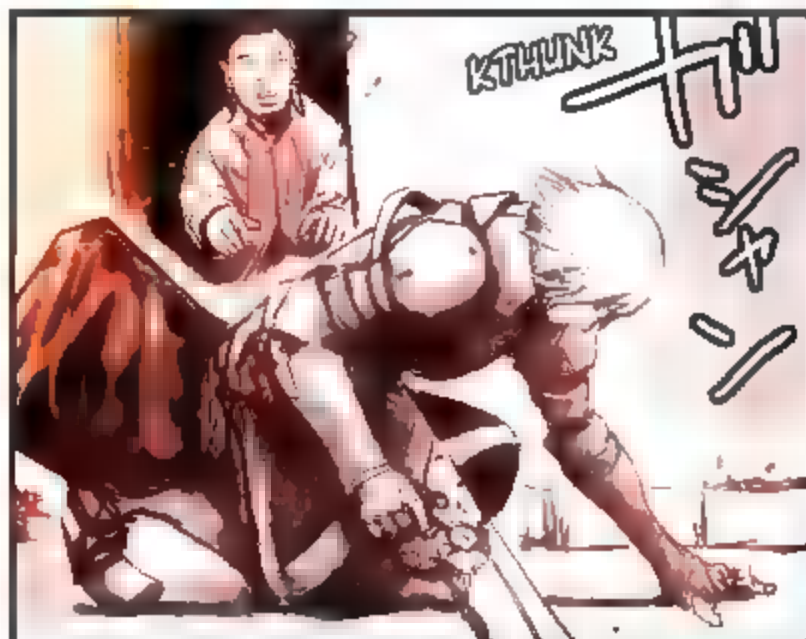
THE TOWER
REACTS TO
HUMANS BY
CREATING
EXTERMINATORS.
DO NOT
APPROACH
IT.

THERE'S A
CONVERSION
TOWER ACROSS
THAT ABYSS.
THAT'S WHERE
THEY'RE
COMING
FROM.

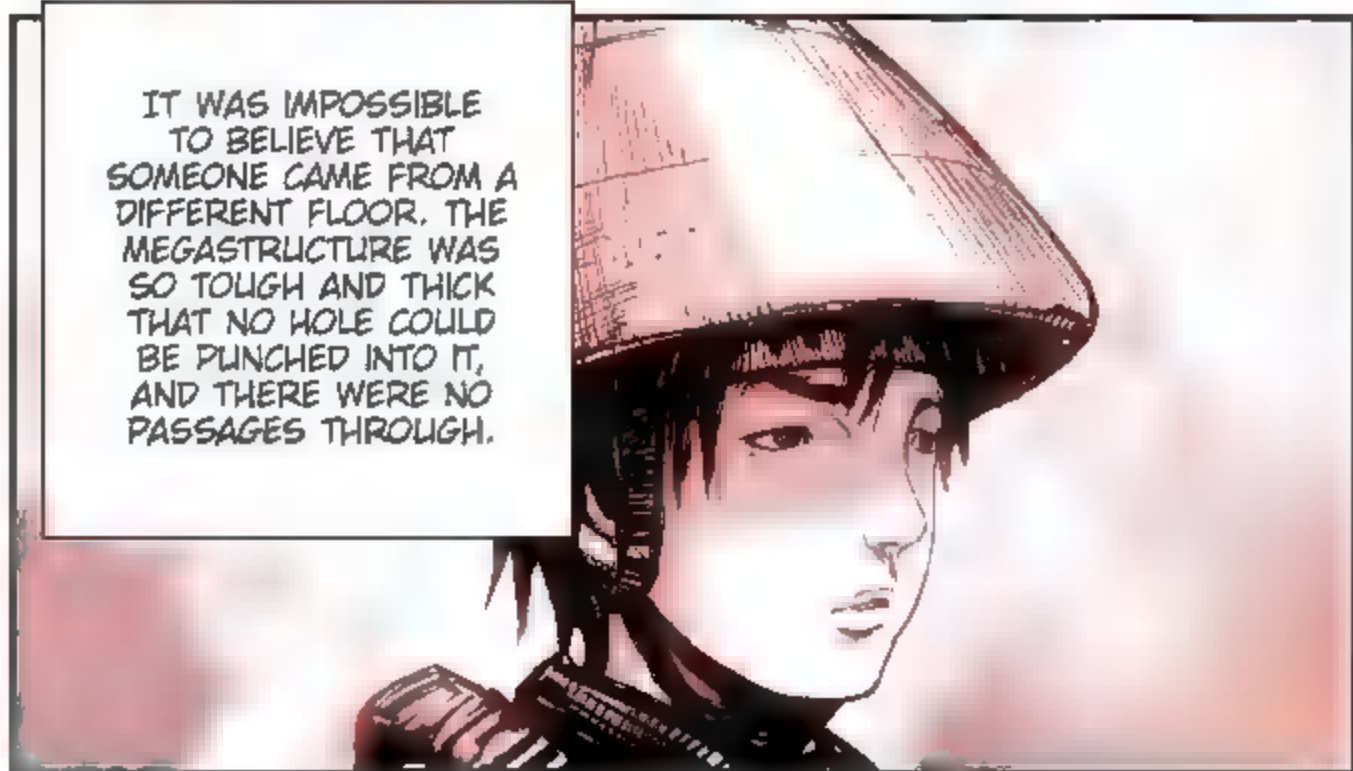






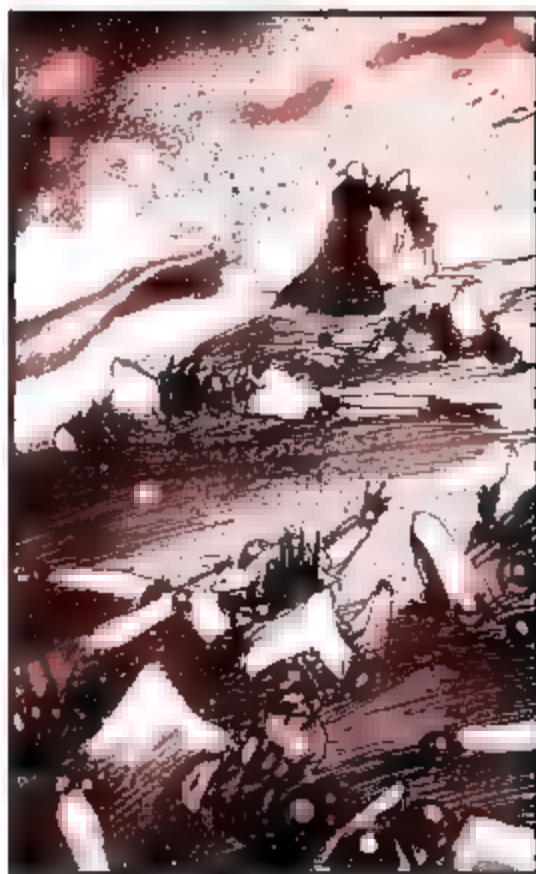


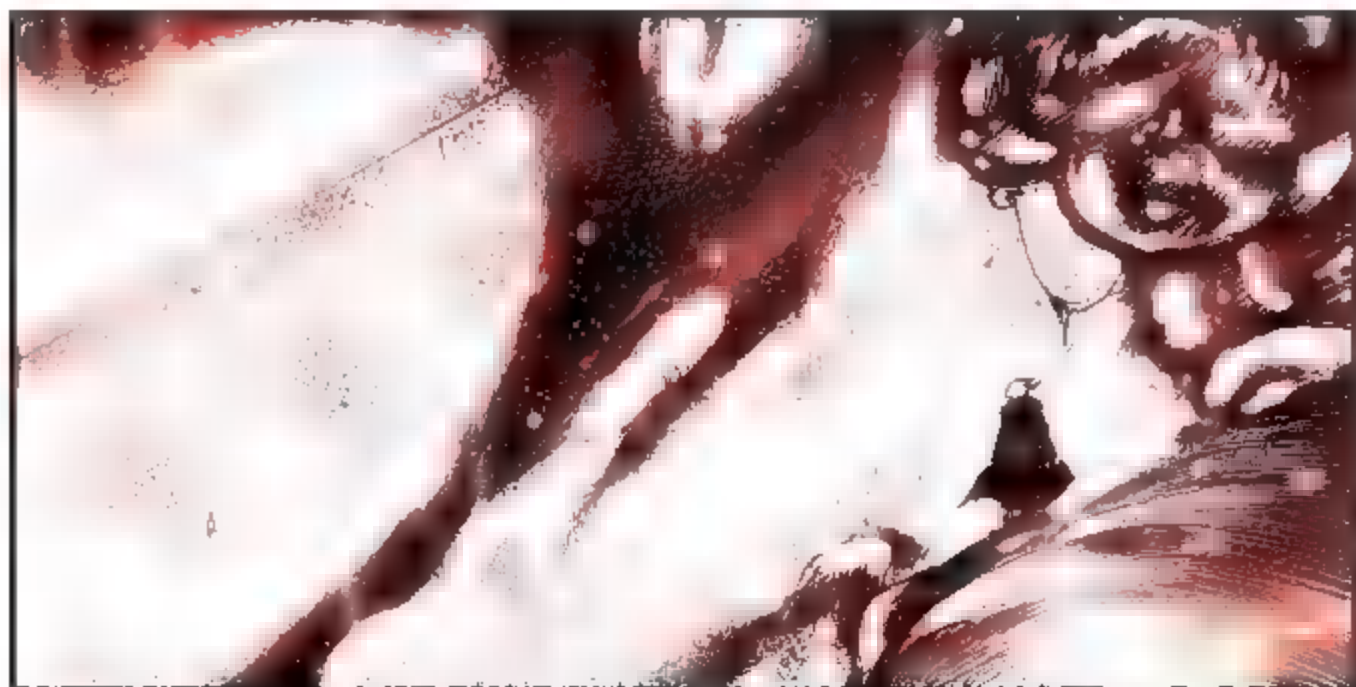
IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE
TO BELIEVE THAT
SOMEONE CAME FROM A
DIFFERENT FLOOR. THE
MEGASTRUCTURE WAS
SO TOUGH AND THICK
THAT NO HOLE COULD
BE PUNCHED INTO IT,
AND THERE WERE NO
PASSAGES THROUGH.

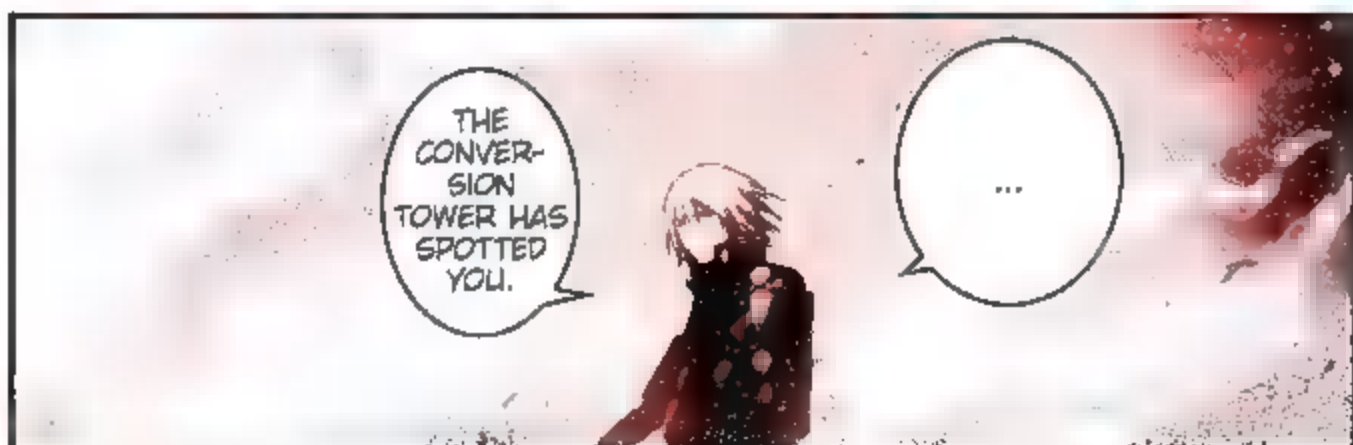
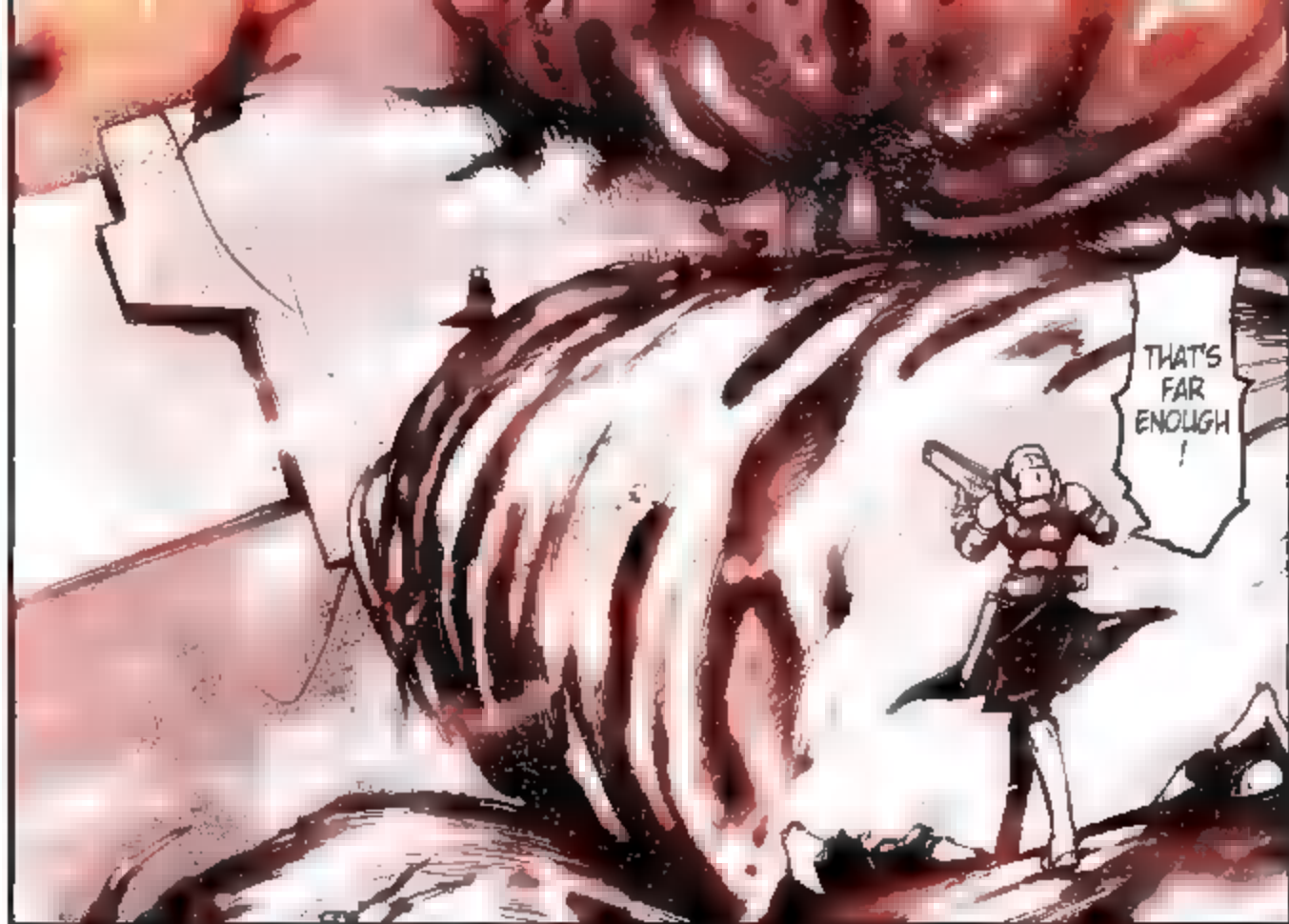


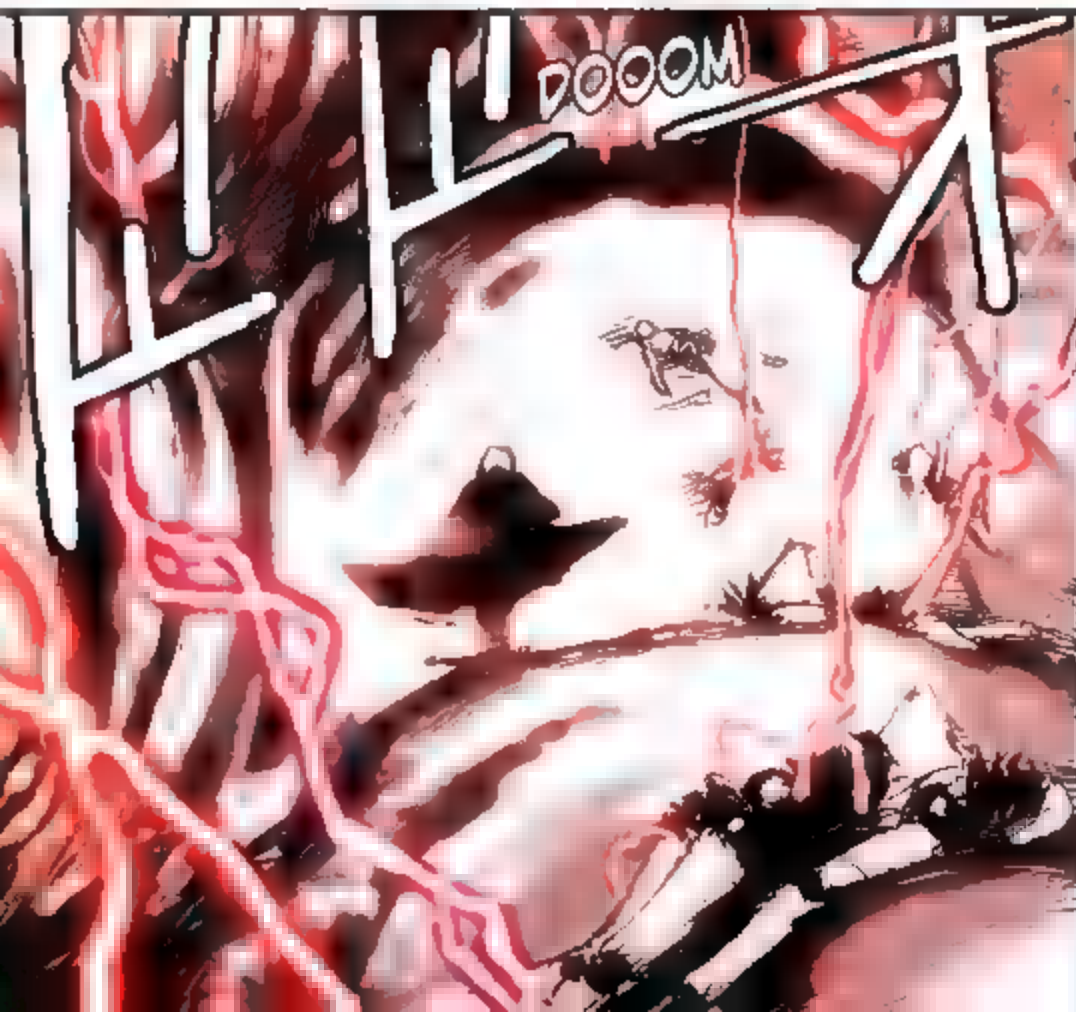
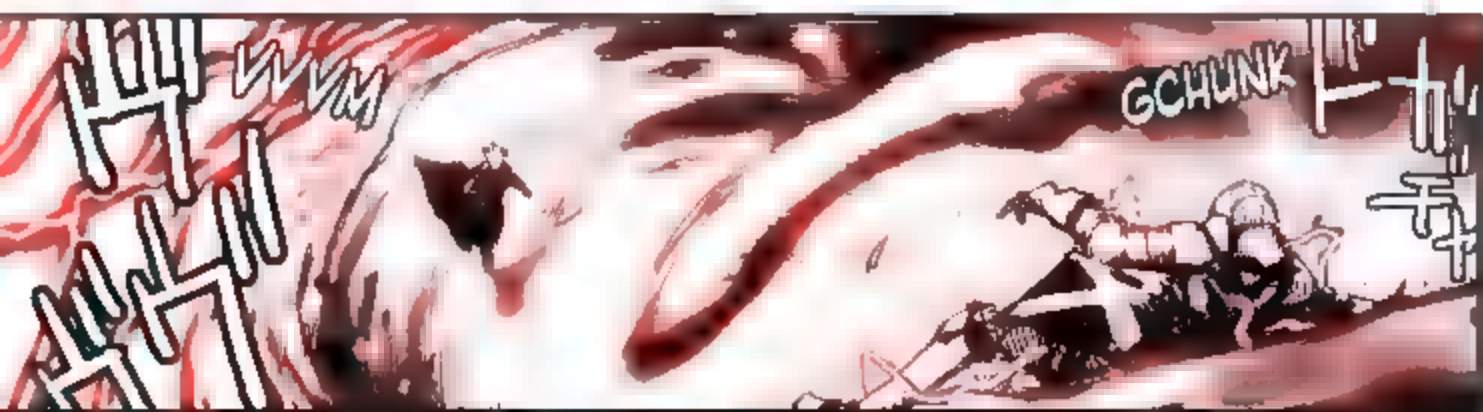
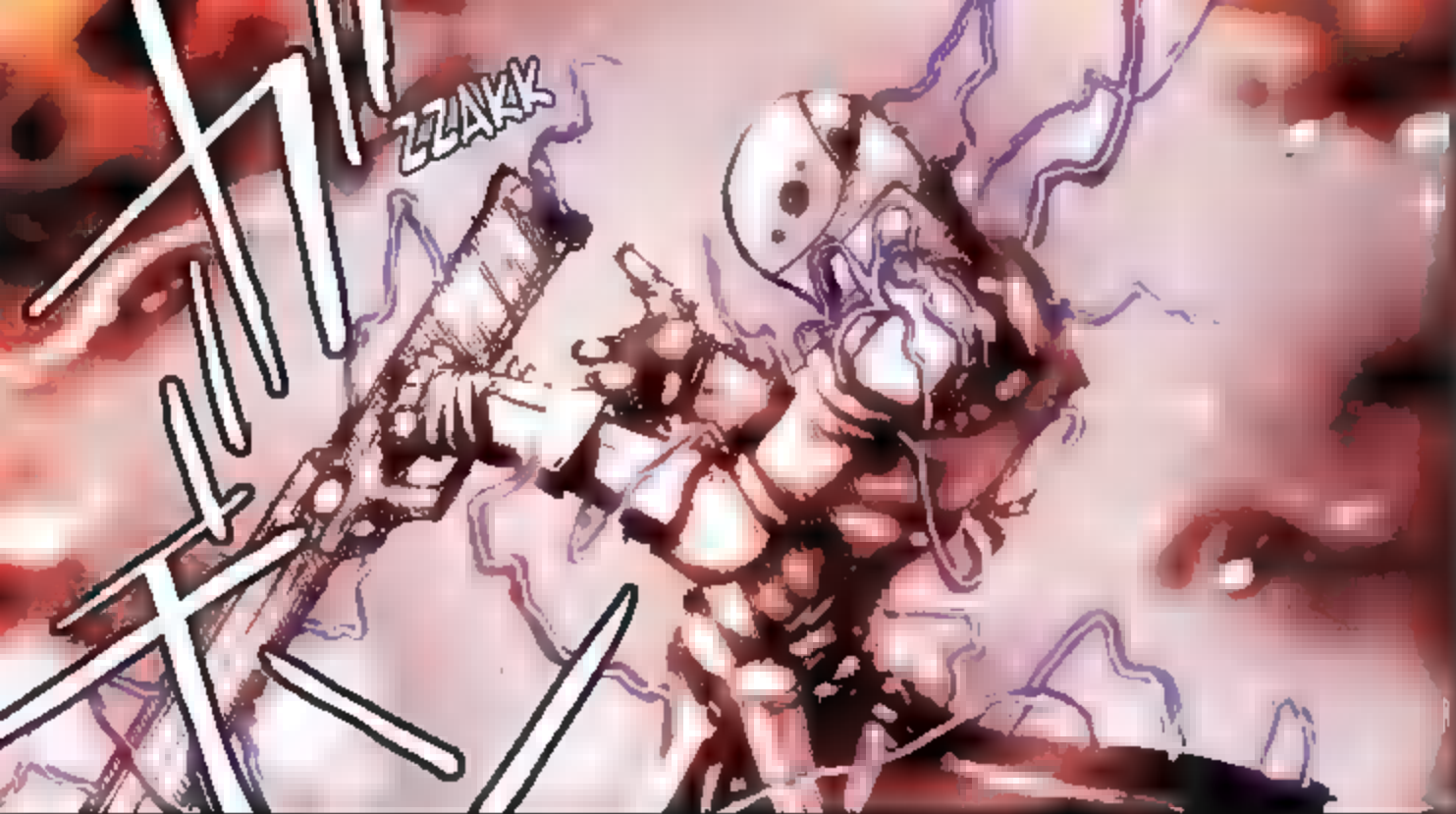




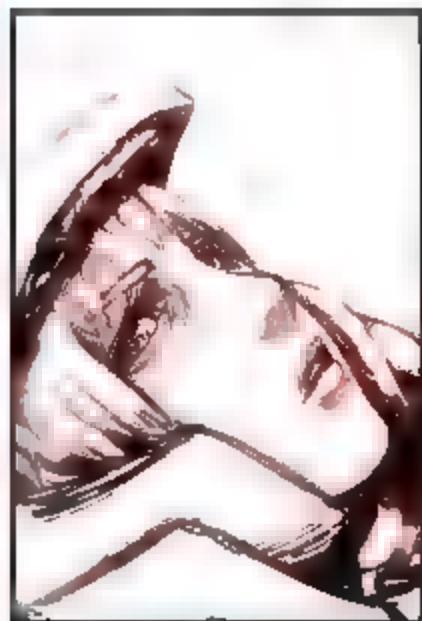




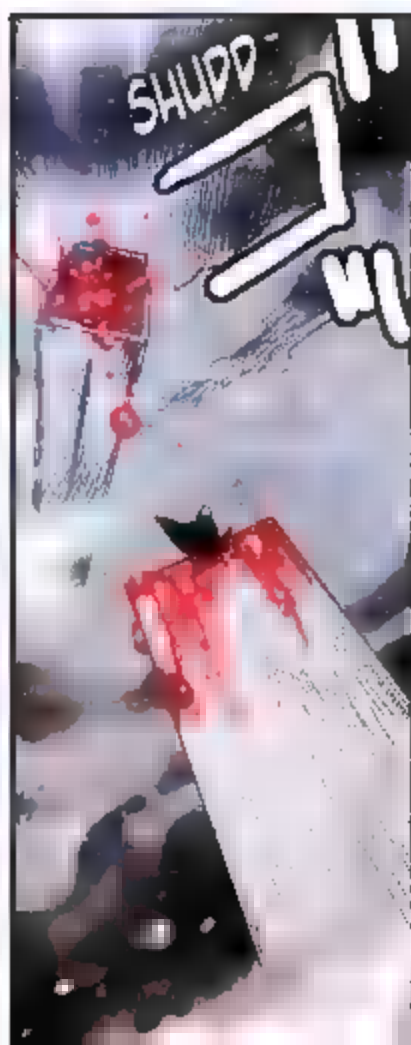
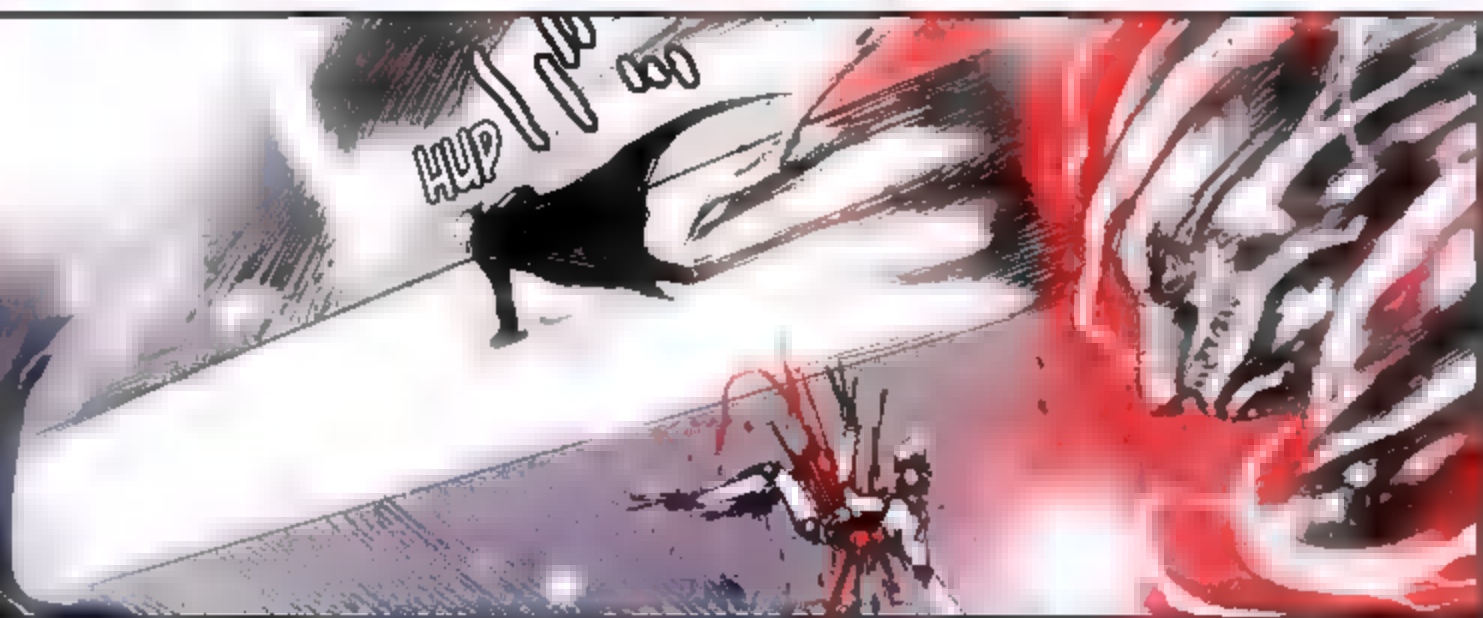


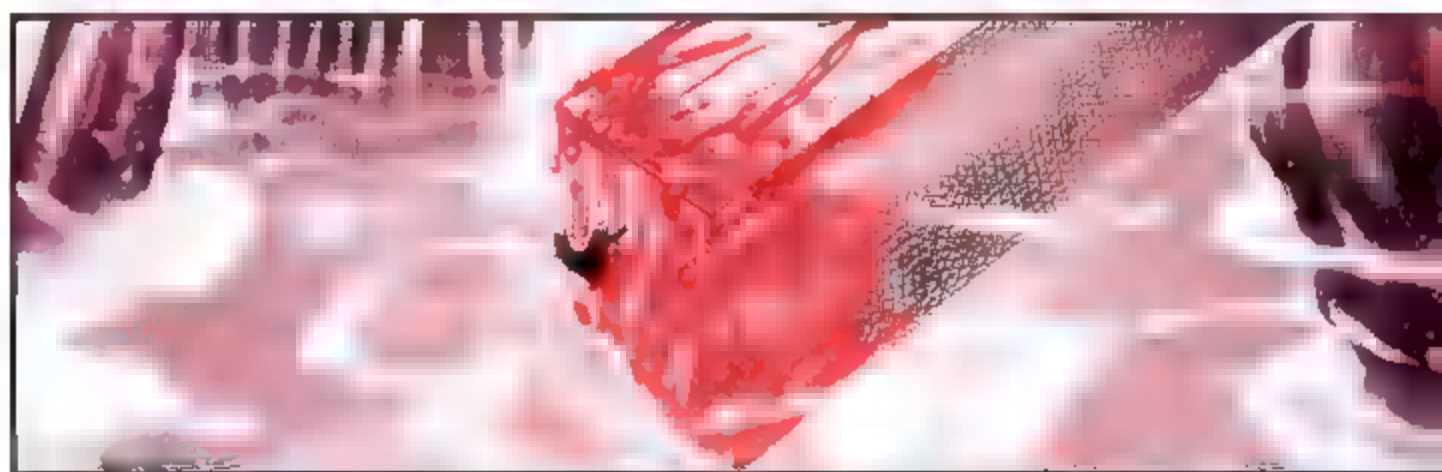






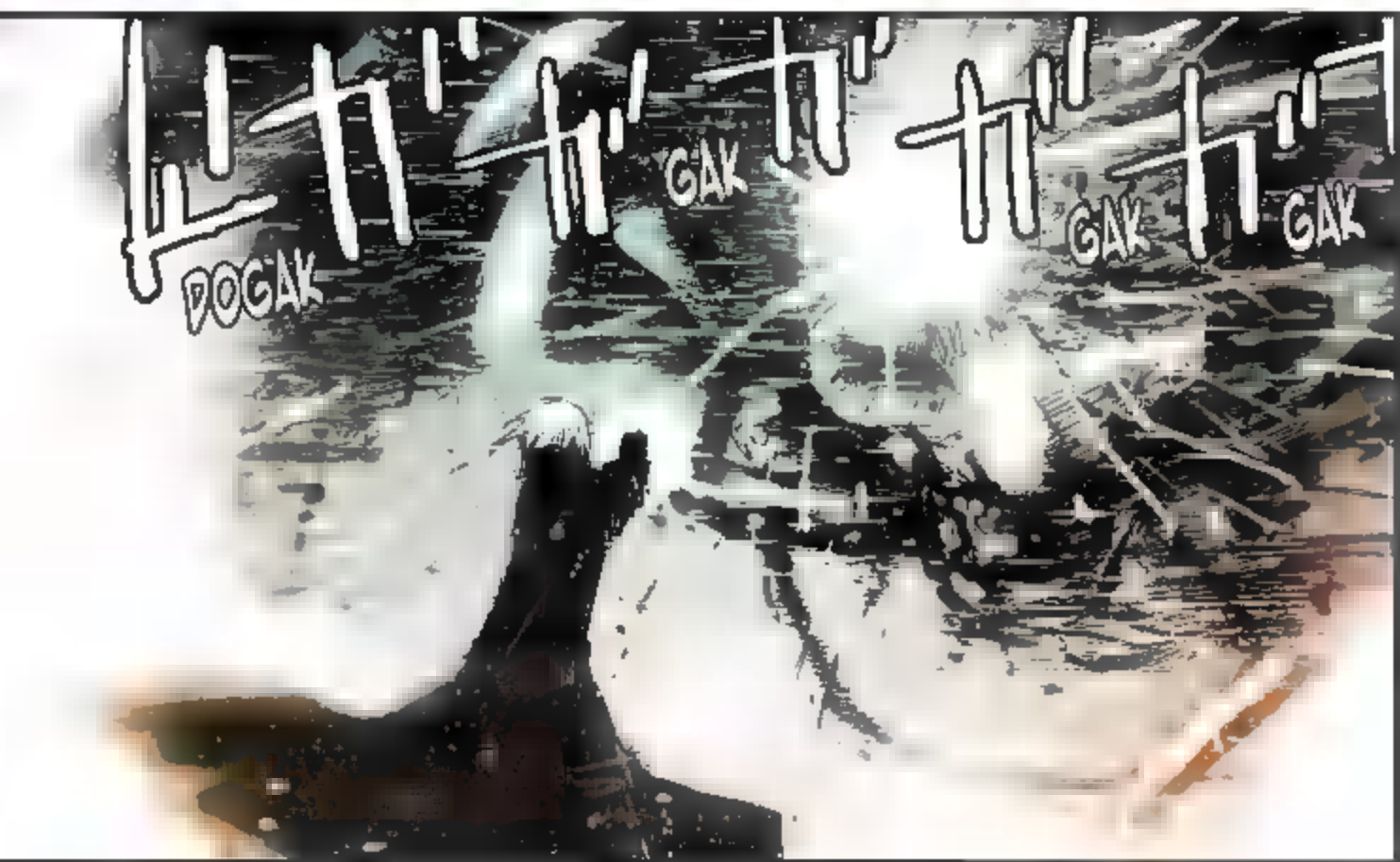


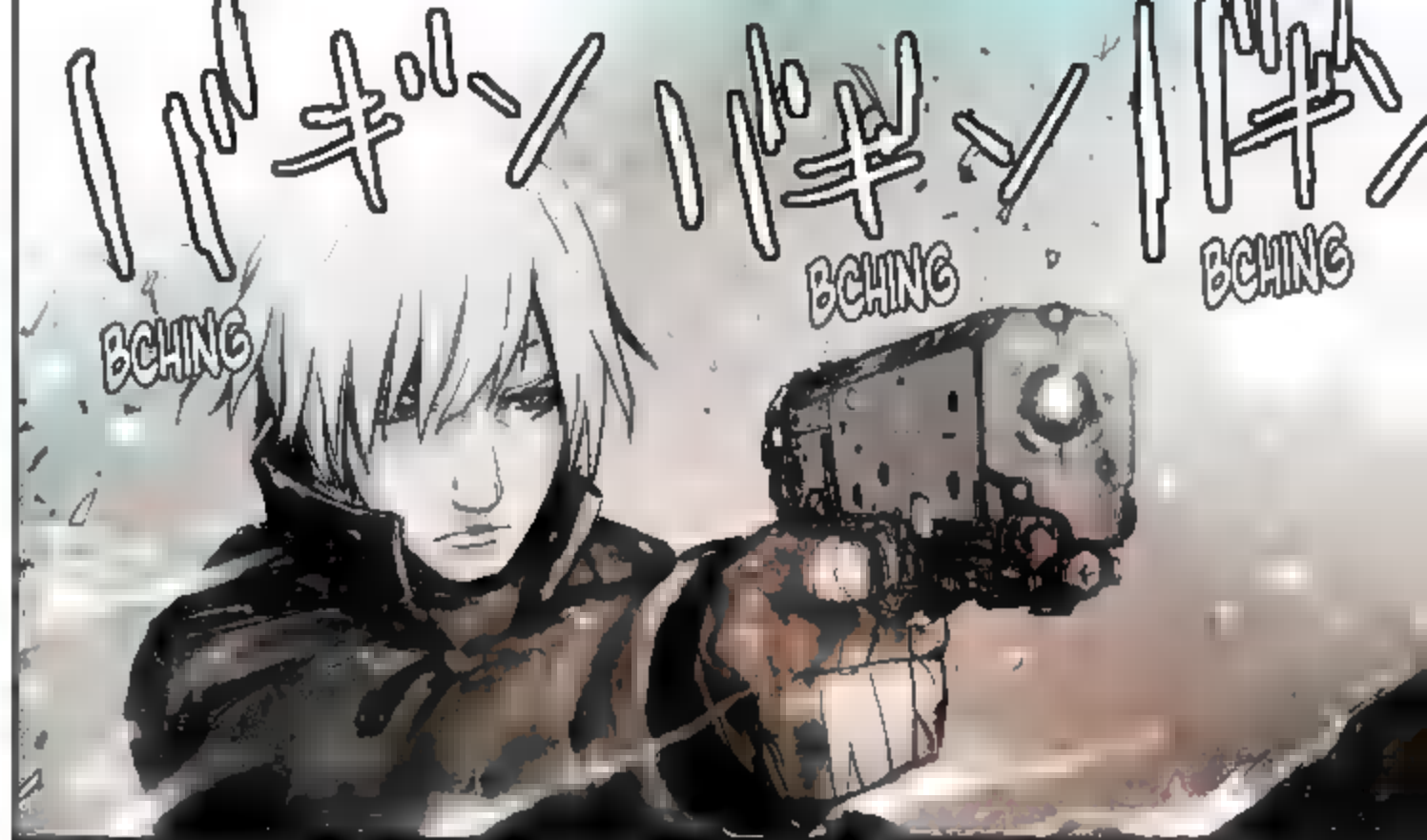




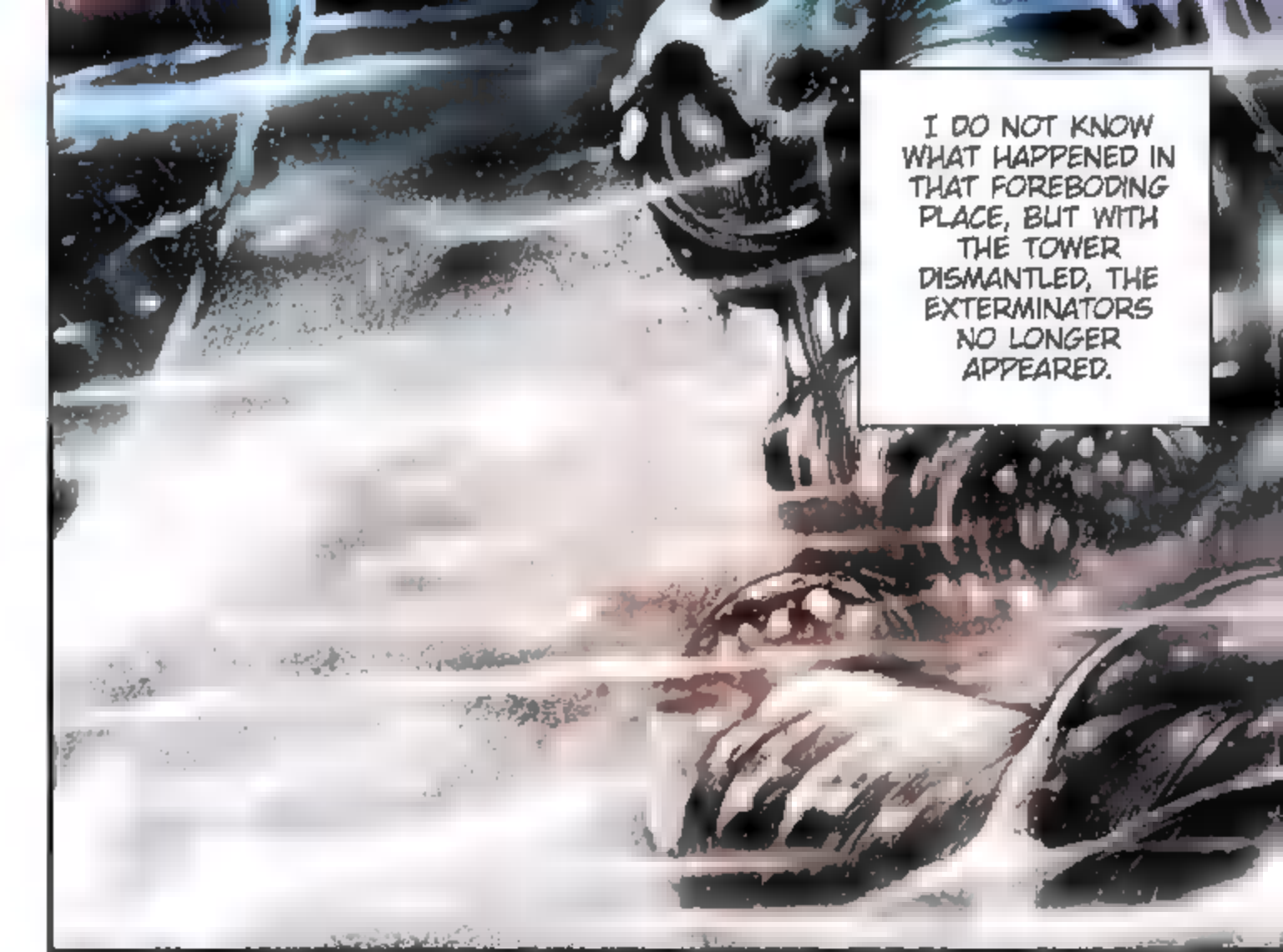












I DO NOT KNOW
WHAT HAPPENED IN
THAT FOREBODING
PLACE, BUT WITH
THE TOWER
DISMANTLED, THE
EXTERMINATORS
NO LONGER
APPEARED.



A FEW YEARS LATER,
THE RUMOR WAS THAT
THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
HAD FOUND AN ENTRANCE
OF SORTS INTO THE
MEGASTRUCTURE, BUT NO
ONE WAS ABLE TO FIND OUT
HOW TO OPEN IT.

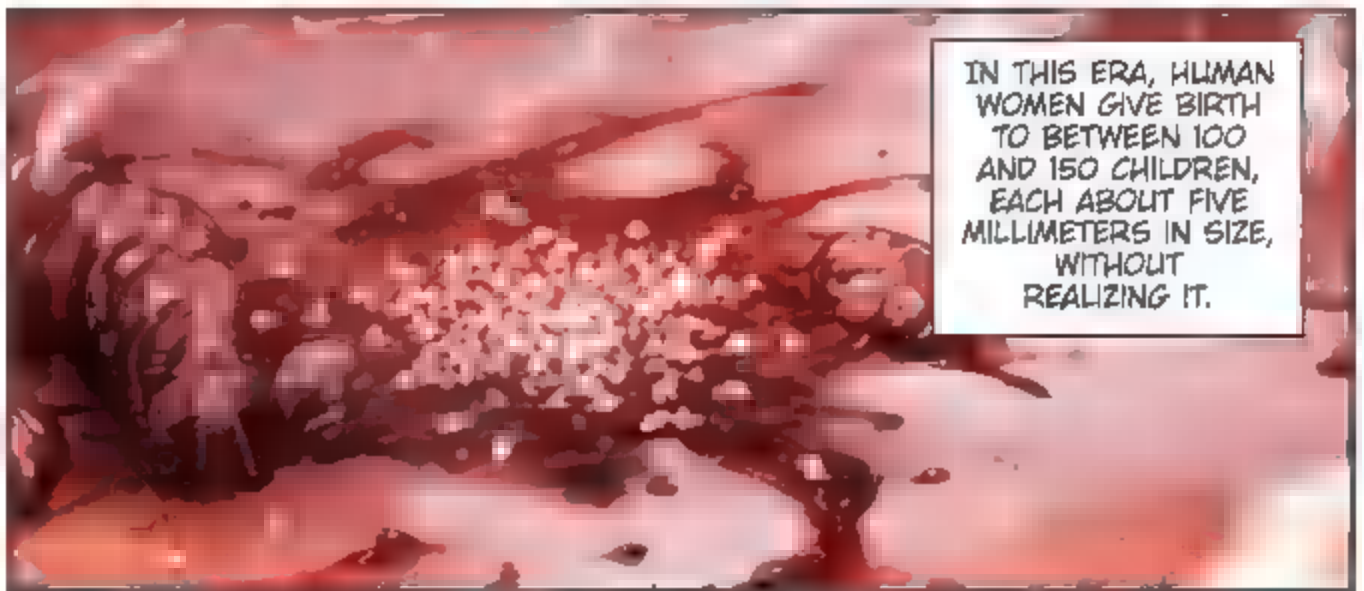
06

NETSPHERE ENGINEER – END

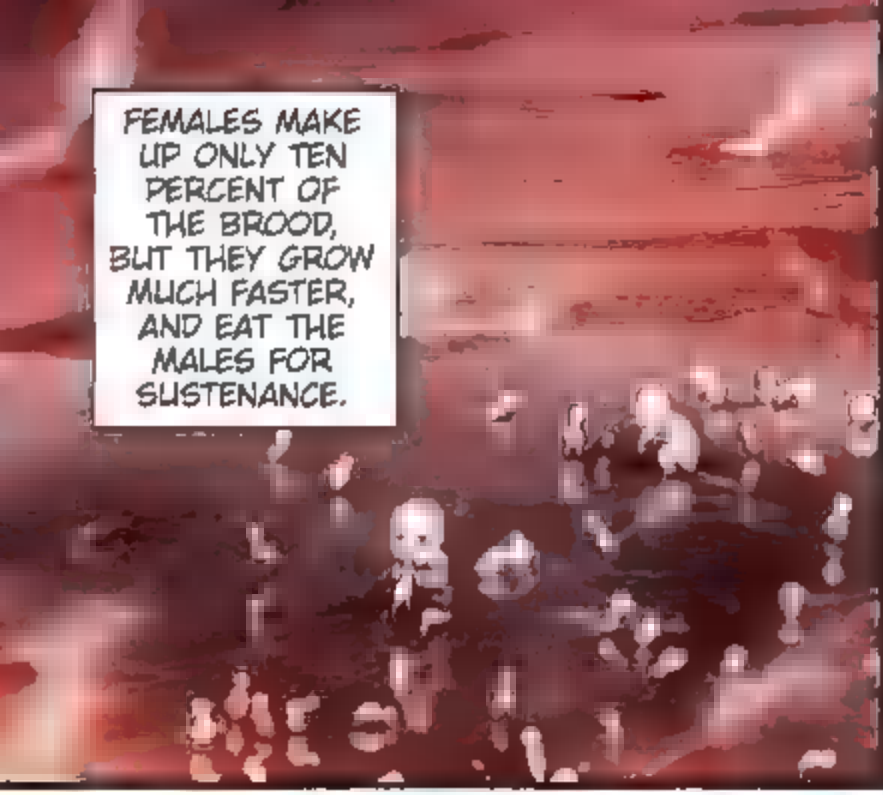




THE UNCEASING RED SKY IS CAUSED BY A TRANSPARENT FILM IN THE ATMOSPHERE. THE FILM IS MADE FROM FLOATING TREES WITH RED SAP. THIS WORLD'S ECOSYSTEM IS MAINTAINED BY JUST 37 SPECIES OF PLANT, WITH THE ONLY SURVIVING ANIMALS BEING FOUR TYPES OF INSECT, AND HUMANITY--THE LAST MAMMAL ON THE PLANET, ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION.



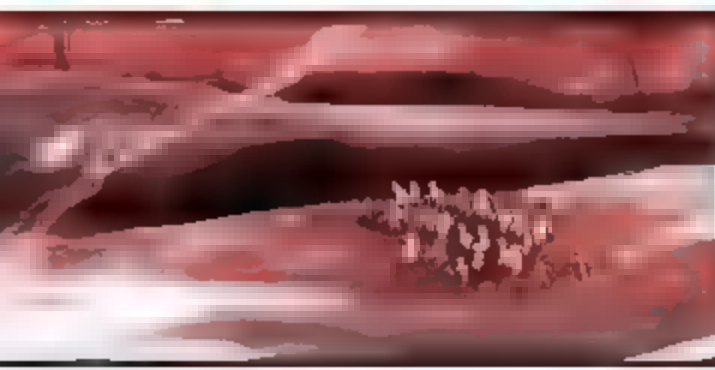
IN THIS ERA, HUMAN WOMEN GIVE BIRTH TO BETWEEN 100 AND 150 CHILDREN, EACH ABOUT FIVE MILLIMETERS IN SIZE, WITHOUT REALIZING IT.



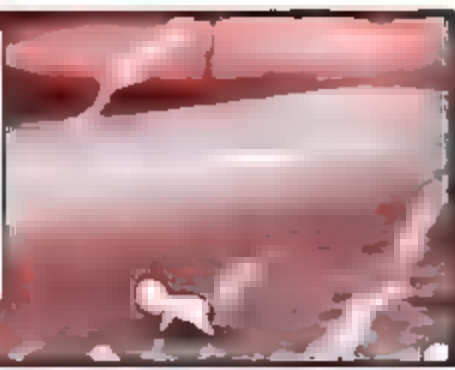
FEMALES MAKE UP ONLY TEN PERCENT OF THE BROOD, BUT THEY GROW MUCH FASTER, AND EAT THE MALES FOR SUSTENANCE.



AFTER BIRTH, THE BABIES EAT THE MOTHER'S WASTE TO GROW.



BY THIS STAGE, THE MALES SEPARATE INTO TWO OR THREE GROUPS THAT ACT SEPARATELY FROM THE FEMALES.



THEIR MAIN SOURCE OF FOOD IS THE MOSS THAT GROWS ON THE EXPOSED ROOTS OF CERTAIN PLANTS, BUT IT IS NOT PLENTIFUL.



MANY GROUPS DIE OUT WITHOUT EVER FINDING A SOURCE OF FOOD.



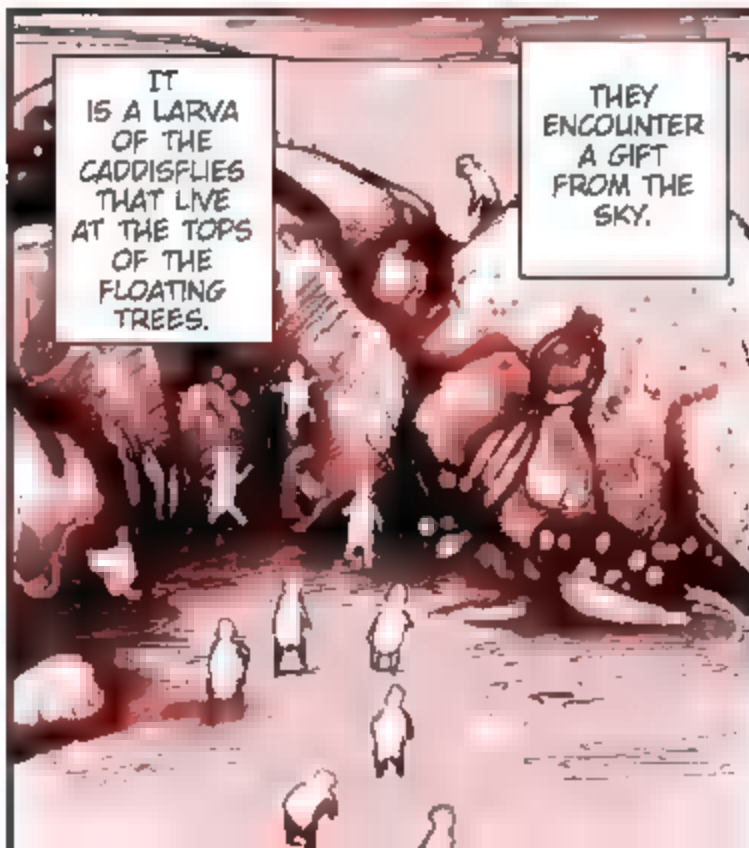
OVER THE TWO MONTHS IT HAS SURVIVED, THIS GROUP HAS LOST OVER HALF ITS NUMBER TO STARVATION, DISEASE, AND ACCIDENTS.

THEY HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT THEIR SHELTER FROM THE STORM WAS LEFT BEHIND BY THEIR DISTANT ANCESTORS.

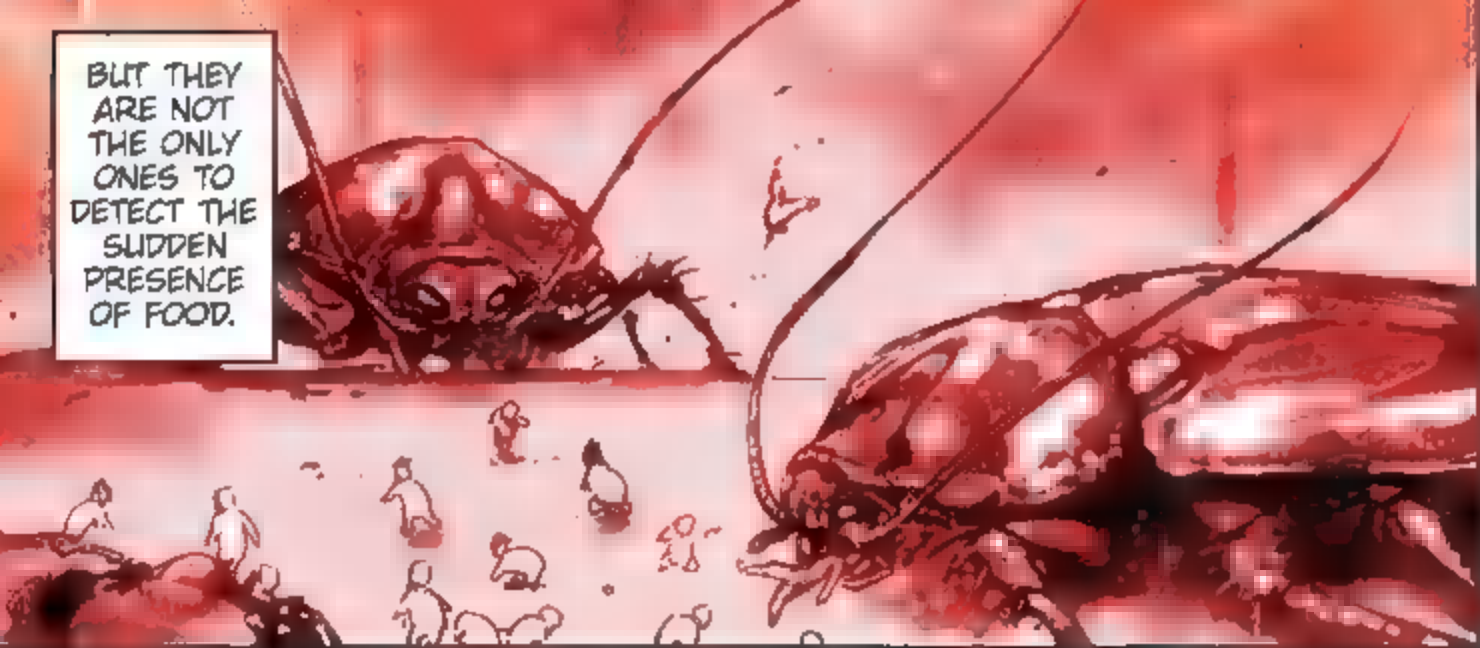


IT IS A LARVA OF THE CADDISFLIES THAT LIVE AT THE TOPS OF THE FLOATING TREES.

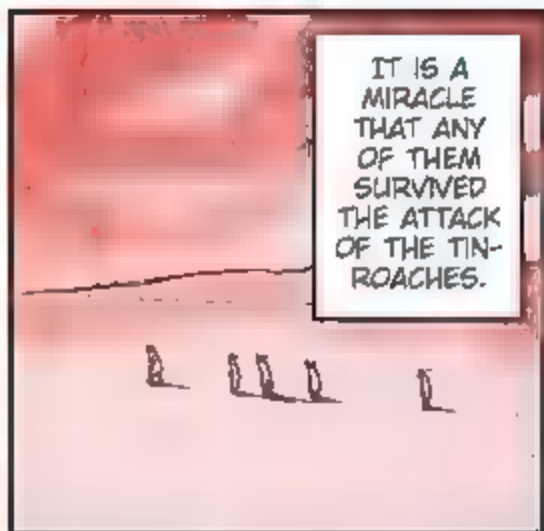
THEY ENCOUNTER A GIFT FROM THE SKY.



BUT THEY
ARE NOT
THE ONLY
ONES TO
DETECT THE
SUDDEN
PRESENCE
OF FOOD.



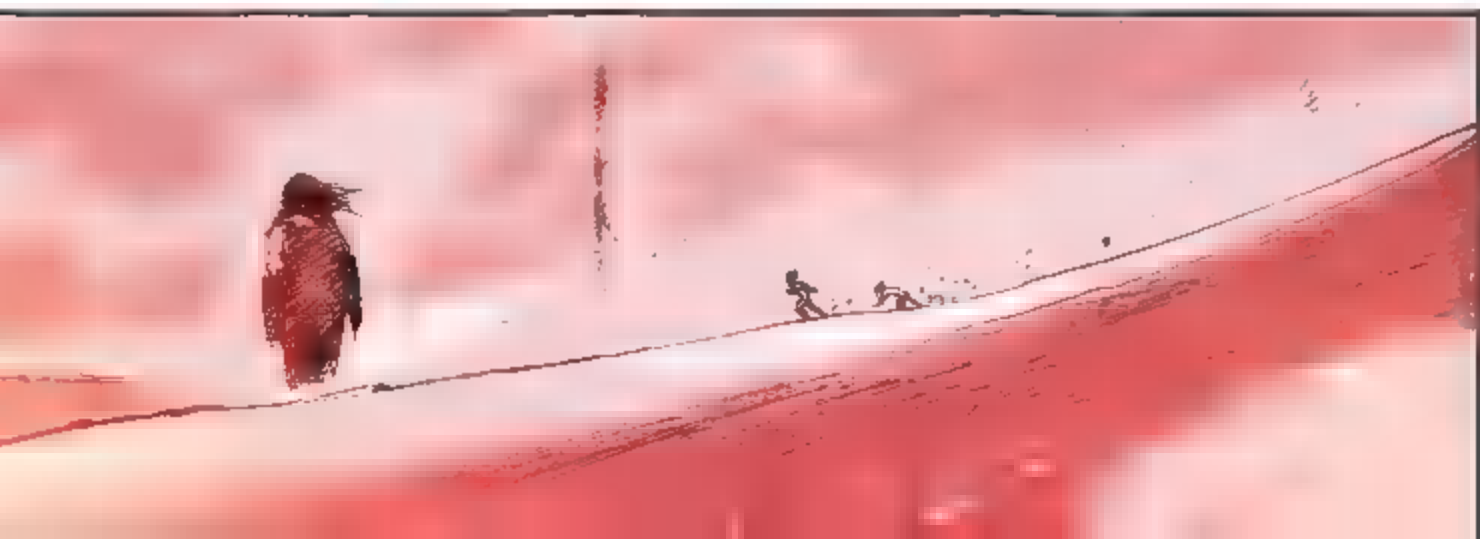
IT IS A
MIRACLE
THAT ANY
OF THEM
SURVIVED
THE ATTACK
OF THE TIN-
ROACHES.

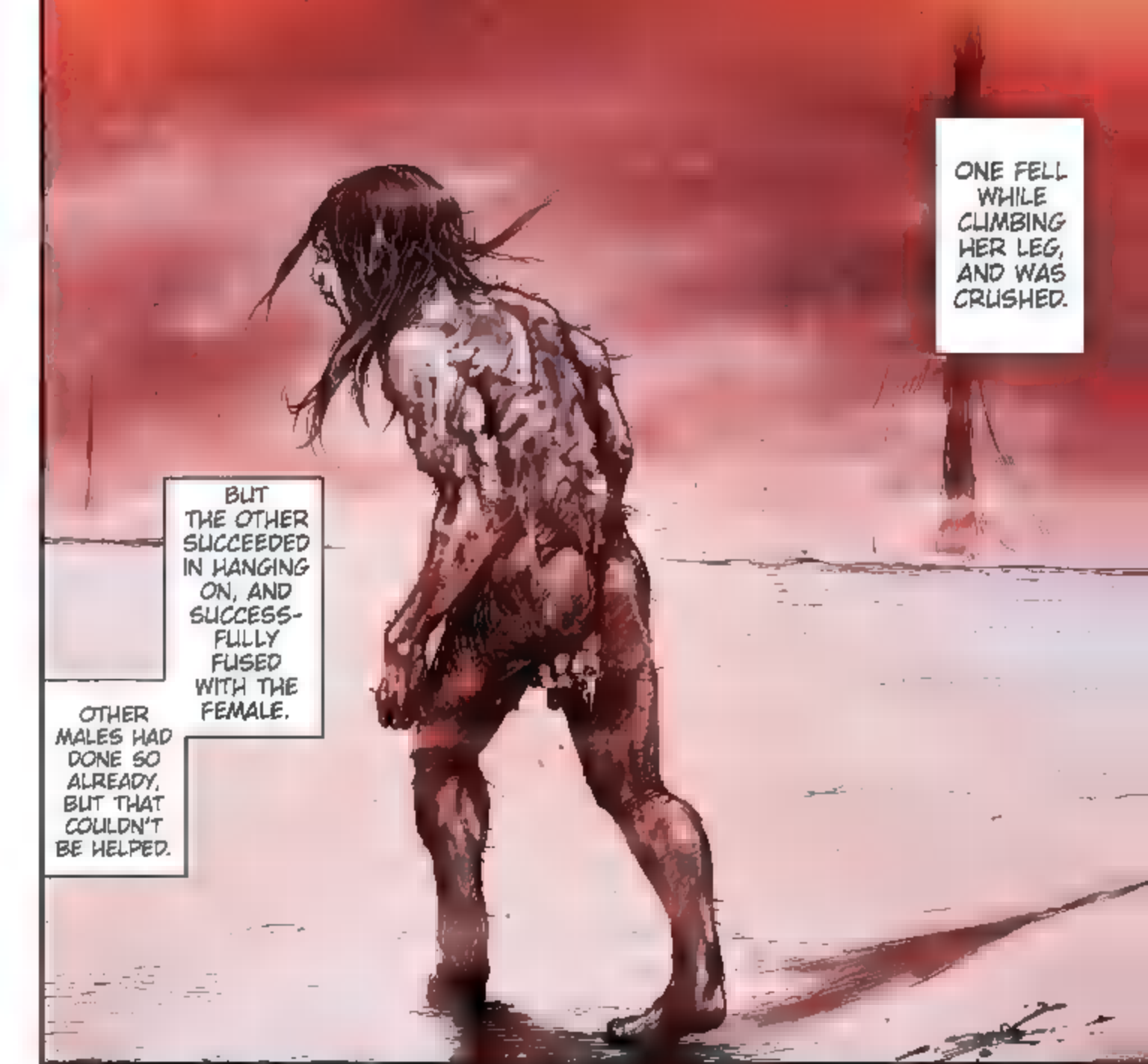


THEY HAVE
JUST CAUGHT
THE SCENT
OF A FEMALE
IN THE FAR
DISTANCE.



ONLY
TWO OF
THIS GROUP
HAVE SUR-
VIVED AN
ENTIRE YEAR
TO ADULT-
HOOD.

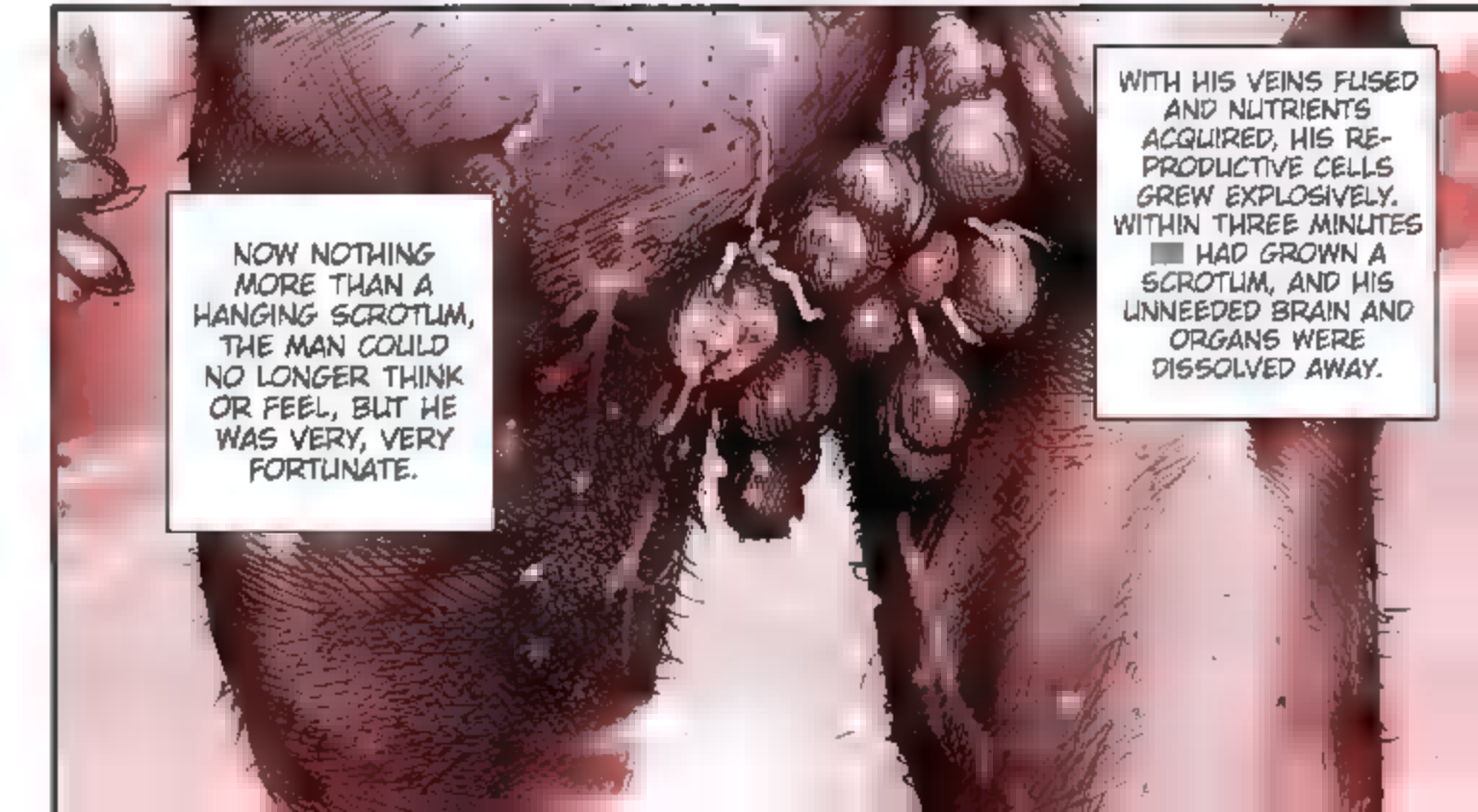




ONE FELL
WHILE
CLIMBING
HER LEG,
AND WAS
CRUSHED.

BUT
THE OTHER
SUCCEEDED
IN HANGING
ON, AND
SUCCESS-
FULLY
FUSED
WITH THE
FEMALE.

OTHER
MALES HAD
DONE SO
ALREADY,
BUT THAT
COULDN'T
BE HELPED.



NOW NOTHING
MORE THAN A
HANGING SCROTUM,
THE MAN COULD
NO LONGER THINK
OR FEEL, BUT HE
WAS VERY, VERY
FORTUNATE.

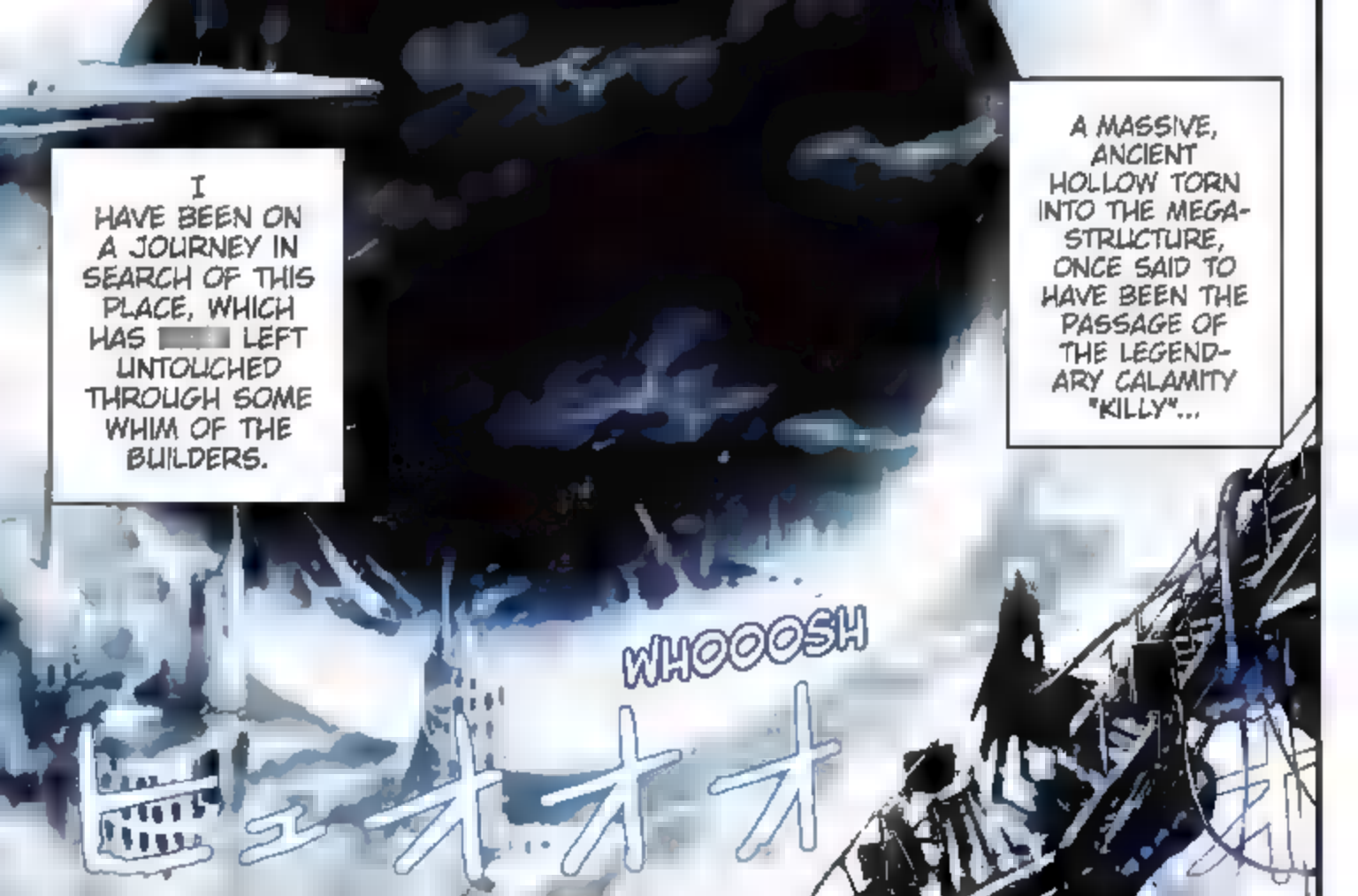
WITH HIS VEINS FUSED
AND NUTRIENTS
ACQUIRED, HIS RE-
PRODUCTIVE CELLS
GREW EXPLOSIVELY.
WITHIN THREE MINUTES
■ HAD GROWN A
SCROTUM, AND HIS
UNNEEDED BRAIN AND
ORGANS WERE
DISSOLVED AWAY.

07

PUMP - END

08

BLAME!
EIGHTH-GENERATION
PCELL'S MEGASTRUCTURE
ESCAPE CHRONICLE



I
HAVE BEEN ON
A JOURNEY IN
SEARCH OF THIS
PLACE, WHICH
HAS ■■■ LEFT
UNTouched
THROUGH SOME
WHIM OF THE
BUILDERS.

A MASSIVE,
ANCIENT
HOLLOW TORN
INTO THE MEGA-
STRUCTURE,
ONCE SAID TO
HAVE BEEN THE
PASSAGE OF
THE LEGEND-
ARY CALAMITY
"KILLY"...

WHOOOSH



...THAT WOULD
MEAN THE CITY
ITSELF ■ NOT
AN ENDLESSLY
REPEATING
STRUCTURE,
BUT, IN FACT,
HAS AN
"END"...

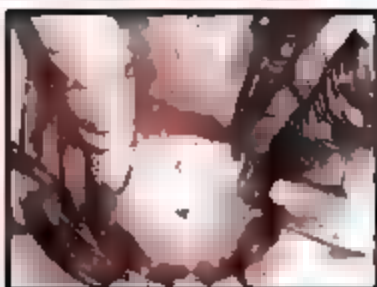
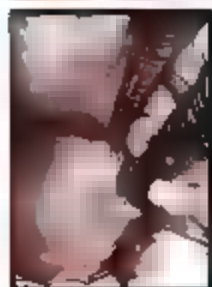
AND IF
THIS
KILLY
TRULY
EXISTED...



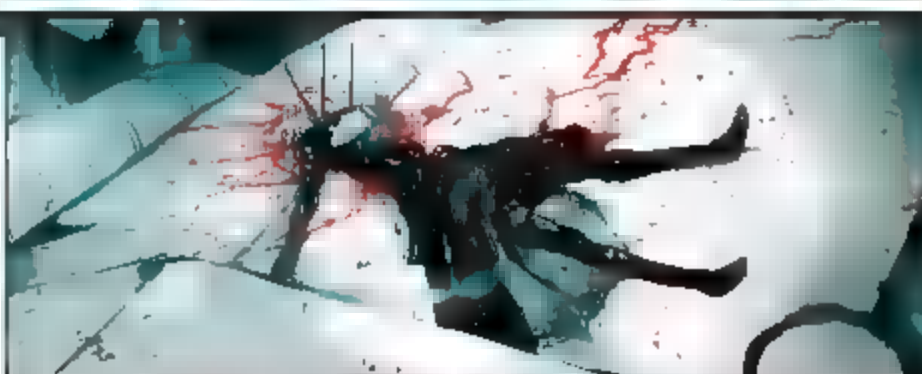
AT SOME
POINT I HAD
WANDERED
INTO A
HUMAN
SETTLEMENT
WITHOUT
REALIZING
IT.

I WAS
CARE-
LESS. IT
HAD BEEN
AGES
SINCE I
LAST SAW
A HUMAN.

OH,
DAMN.
THIS
LOOKS
LIKE...



MY BILLION-
SECOND-LONG
JUVENESCENT
PERIOD BACK
HOME FELT
LIKE MERELY
THE BLINK
OF AN EYE
IN COMPARI-
SON...



IT WAS
A VERY
LONG
JOURNEY
...



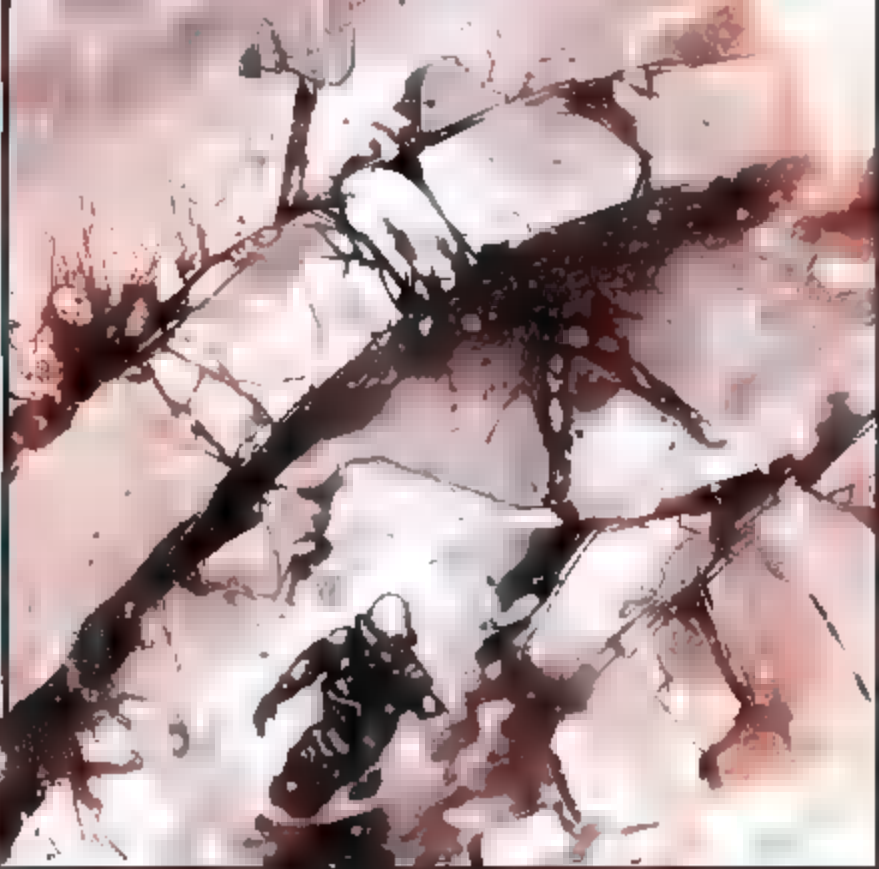
A group of approximately ten figures, dressed in white robes and hoods, stand in a line in a dark, shadowy environment. The figures are mostly white, with some showing dark markings on their faces or robes. They appear to be in a state of vigil or prayer. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a cave or a dense forest at night.

AT THE
TIME, ALL
THE TRIAD-
JUVENILES
WERE DEVO-
TEES TO THE
TEACHINGS
OF IMPEDIARY
ANTIMONISM IN
BARO-CHAPEL.

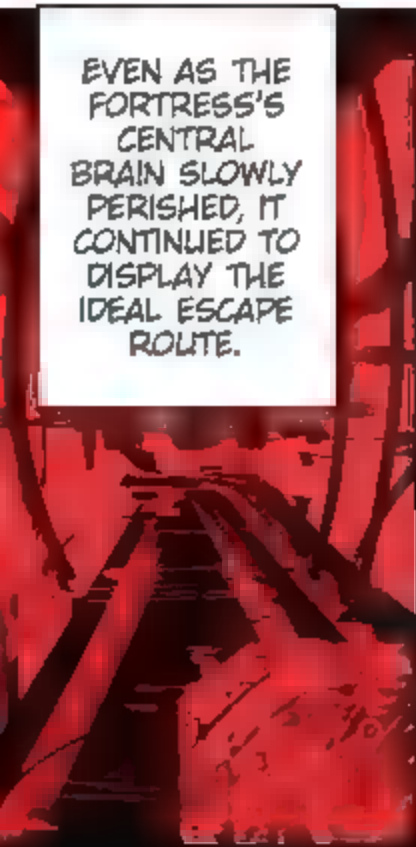
THE HUMANS
SENT A LARGE
BUILDER AFTER
US. ITS BRAIN
HAD BEEN
IMPROPERLY
ALTERED.

KADOOMMM

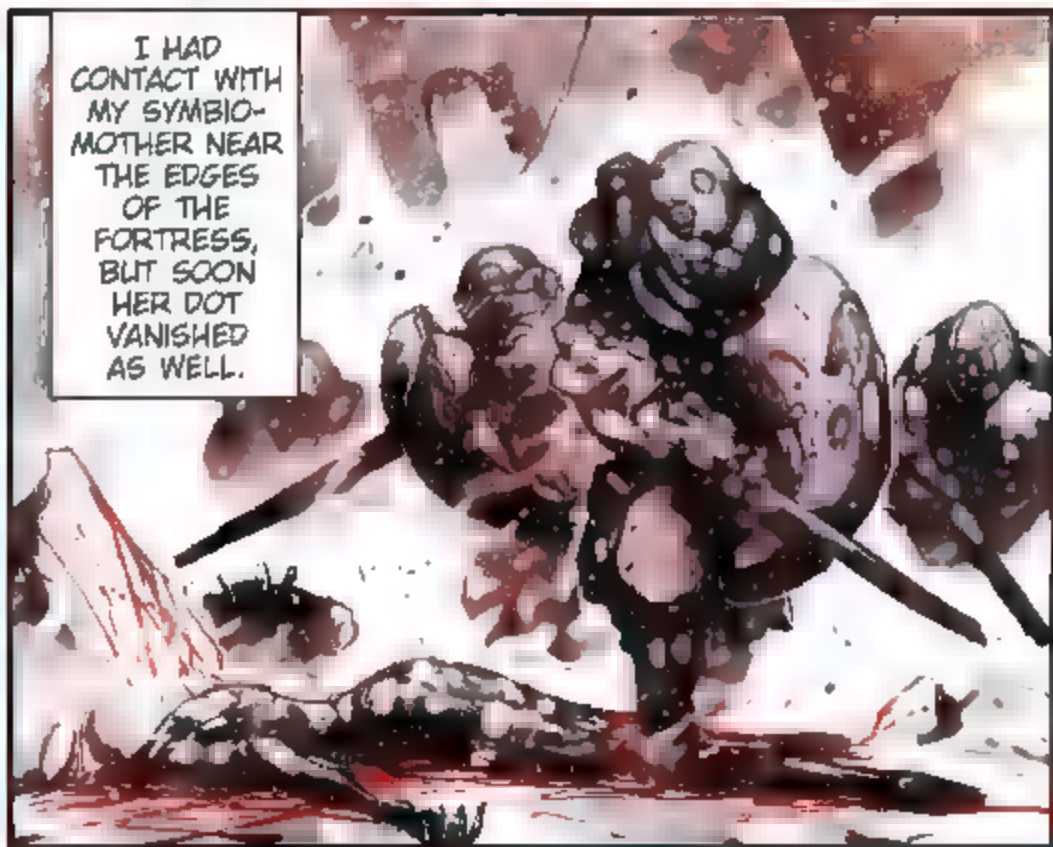
ON MY
RETINAL OVERLAY
OF THE FORTRESS
MAP, THE DOTS
THAT INDICATED
FELLOW SILICON
CREATURES WINKED
OUT ONE AFTER
THE OTHER.



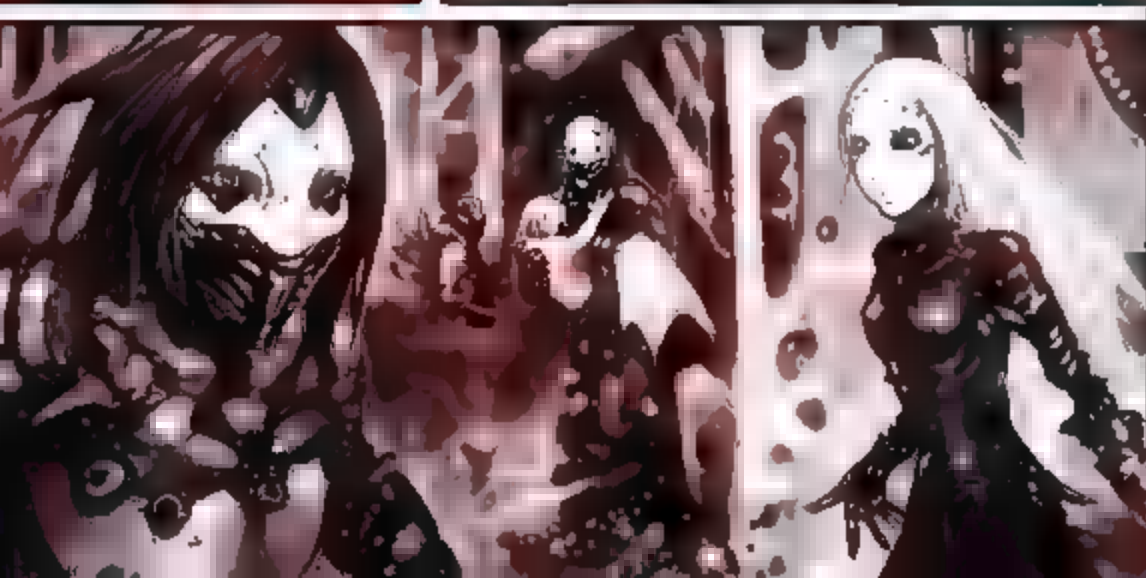
EVEN AS THE
FORTRESS'S
CENTRAL
BRAIN SLOWLY
PERISHED, IT
CONTINUED TO
DISPLAY THE
IDEAL ESCAPE
ROUTE.

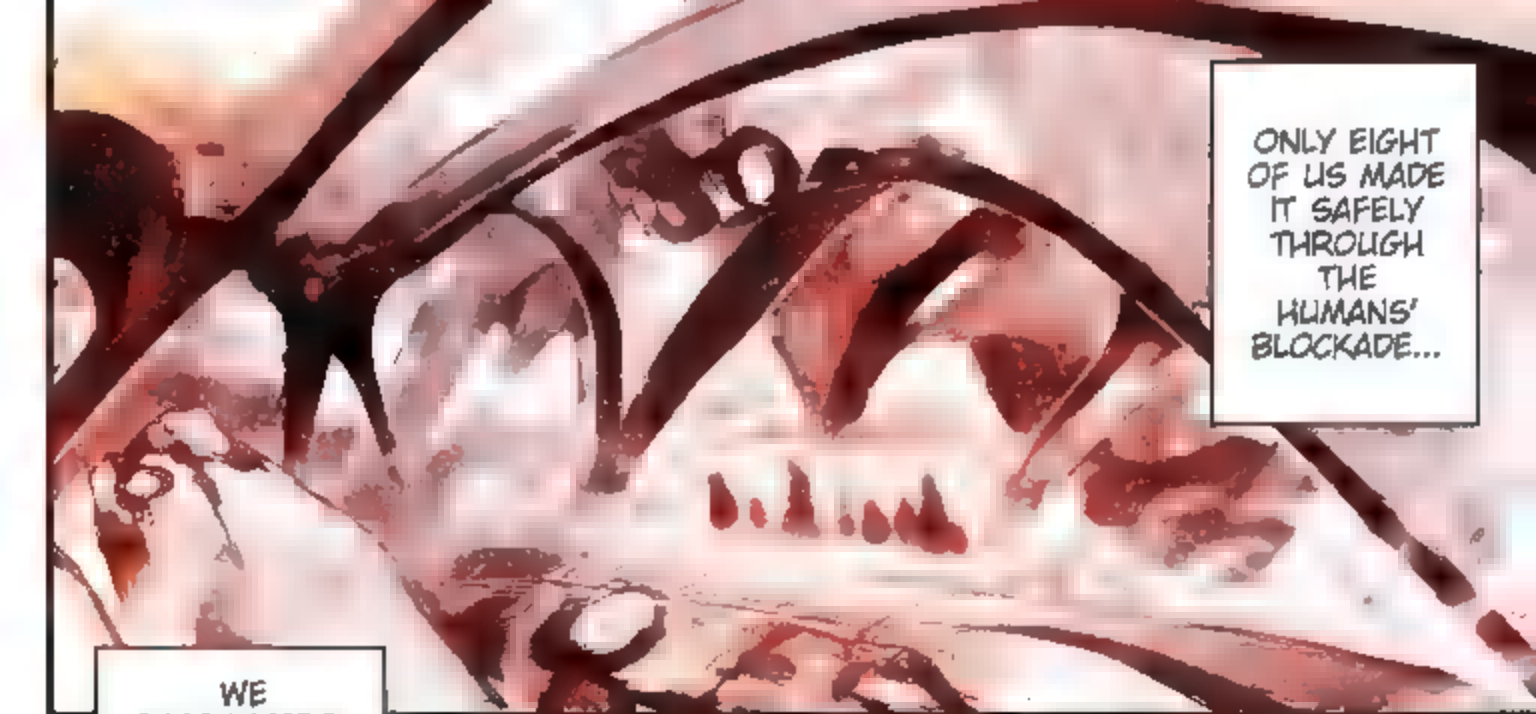


I HAD
CONTACT WITH
MY SYMBIO-
MOTHER NEAR
THE EDGES
OF THE
FORTRESS,
BUT SOON
HER DOT
VANISHED
AS WELL.

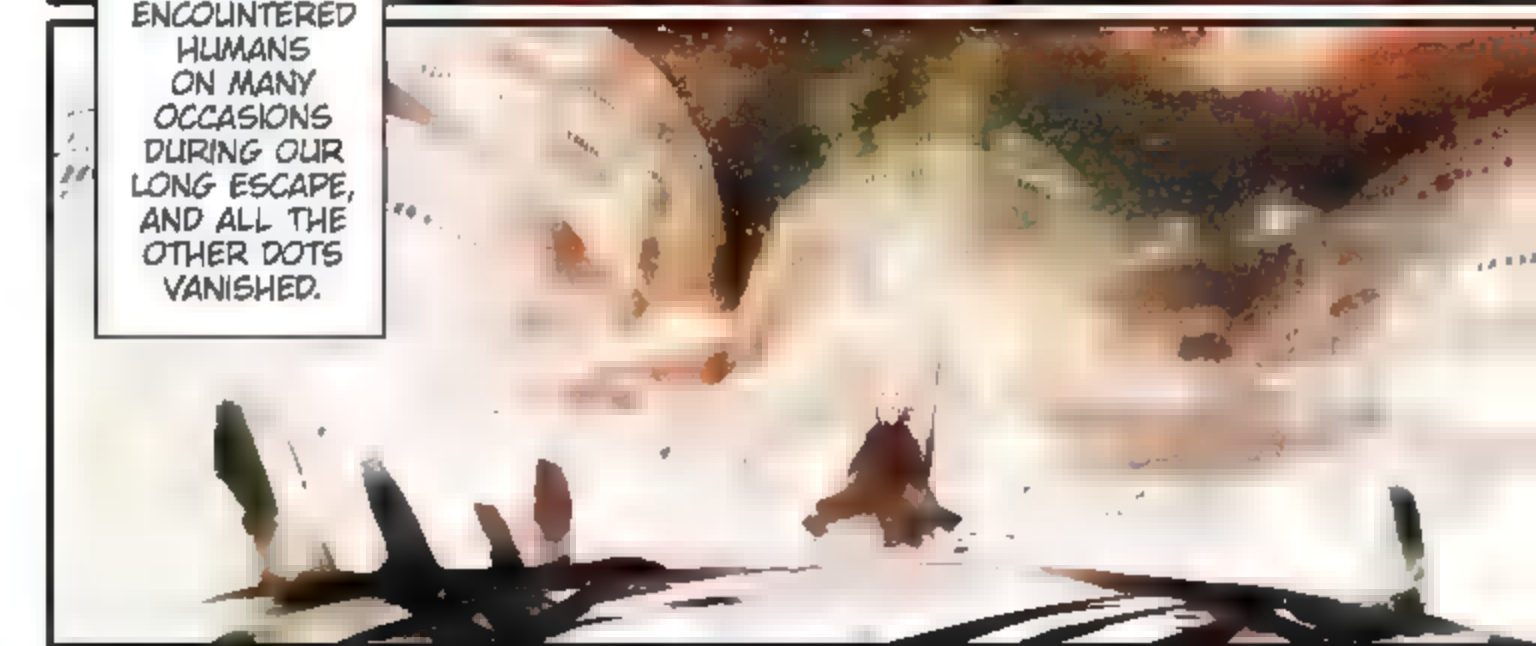


EVENTUALLY
THE NUMBER
OF DOTS
DWINDED TO A
HANDFUL, AND
THE MESSAGES
FROM THE
FORTRESS
ENDED...





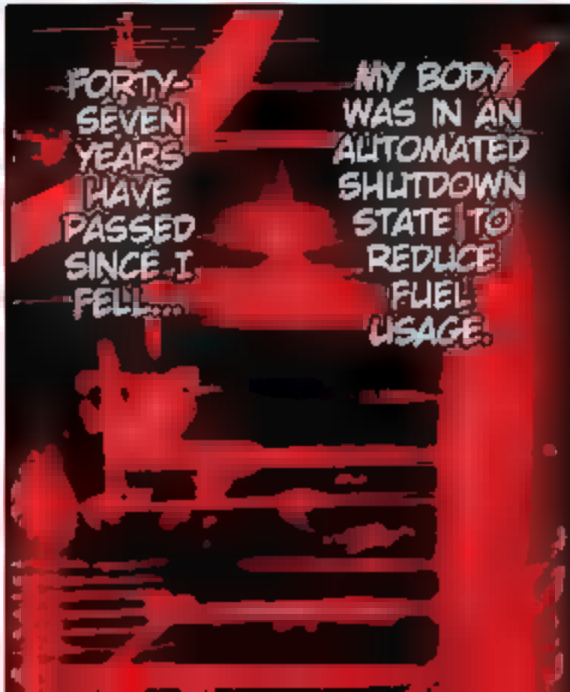
ONLY EIGHT
OF US MADE
IT SAFELY
THROUGH
THE
HUMANS'
BLOCKADE...



WE
ENCOUNTERED
HUMANS
ON MANY
OCCASIONS
DURING OUR
LONG ESCAPE,
AND ALL THE
OTHER DOTS
VANISHED.



RESTORING
CONSCIOUS-
NESS...



FORTY-
SEVEN
YEARS
HAVE
PASSED
SINCE I
FELL...



MY BODY
WAS IN AN
AUTOMATED
SHUTDOWN
STATE TO
REDUCE
FUEL
USAGE.

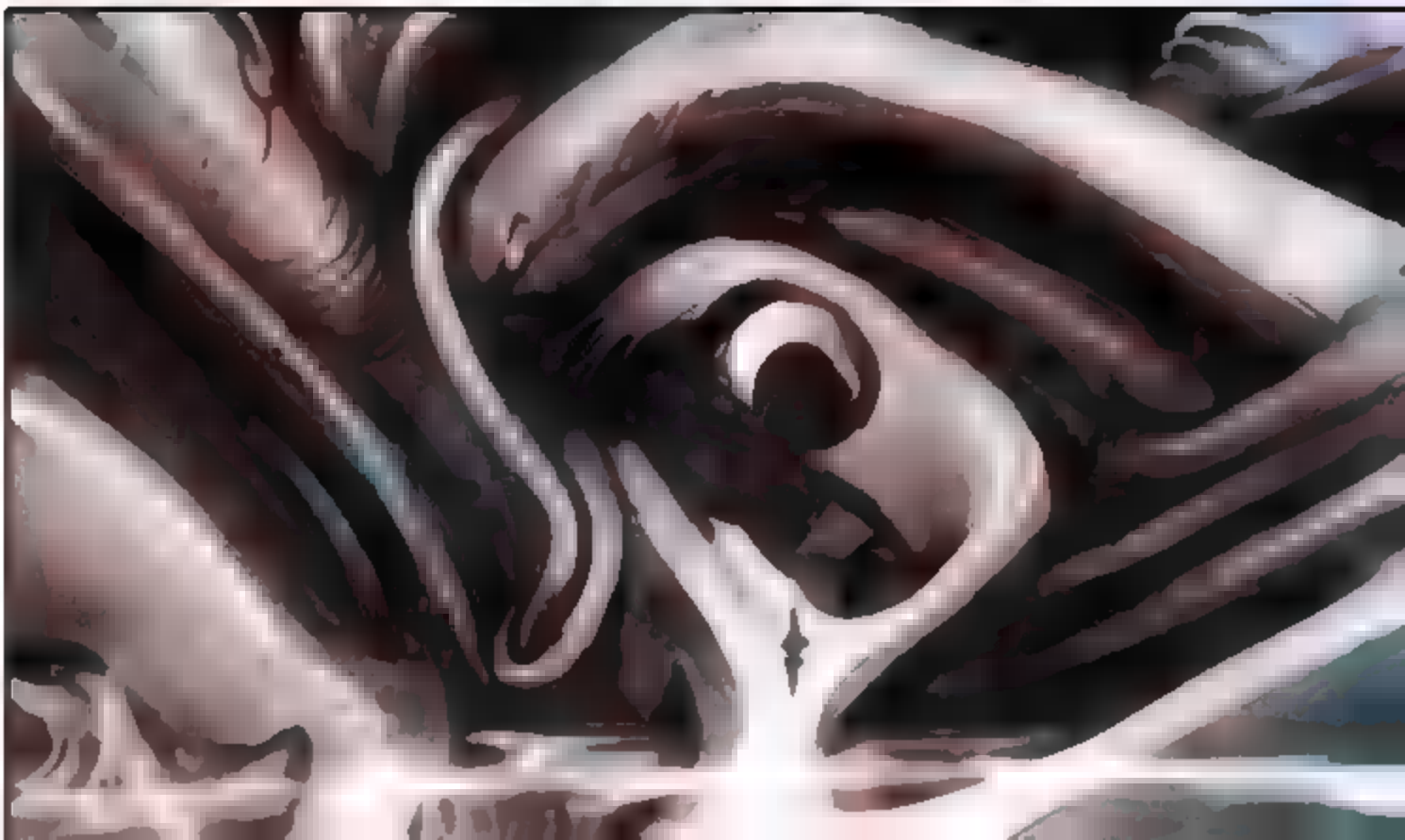
WARNING:
AWAKENING
IMMINENT.
SOMETHING
APPROACHING.

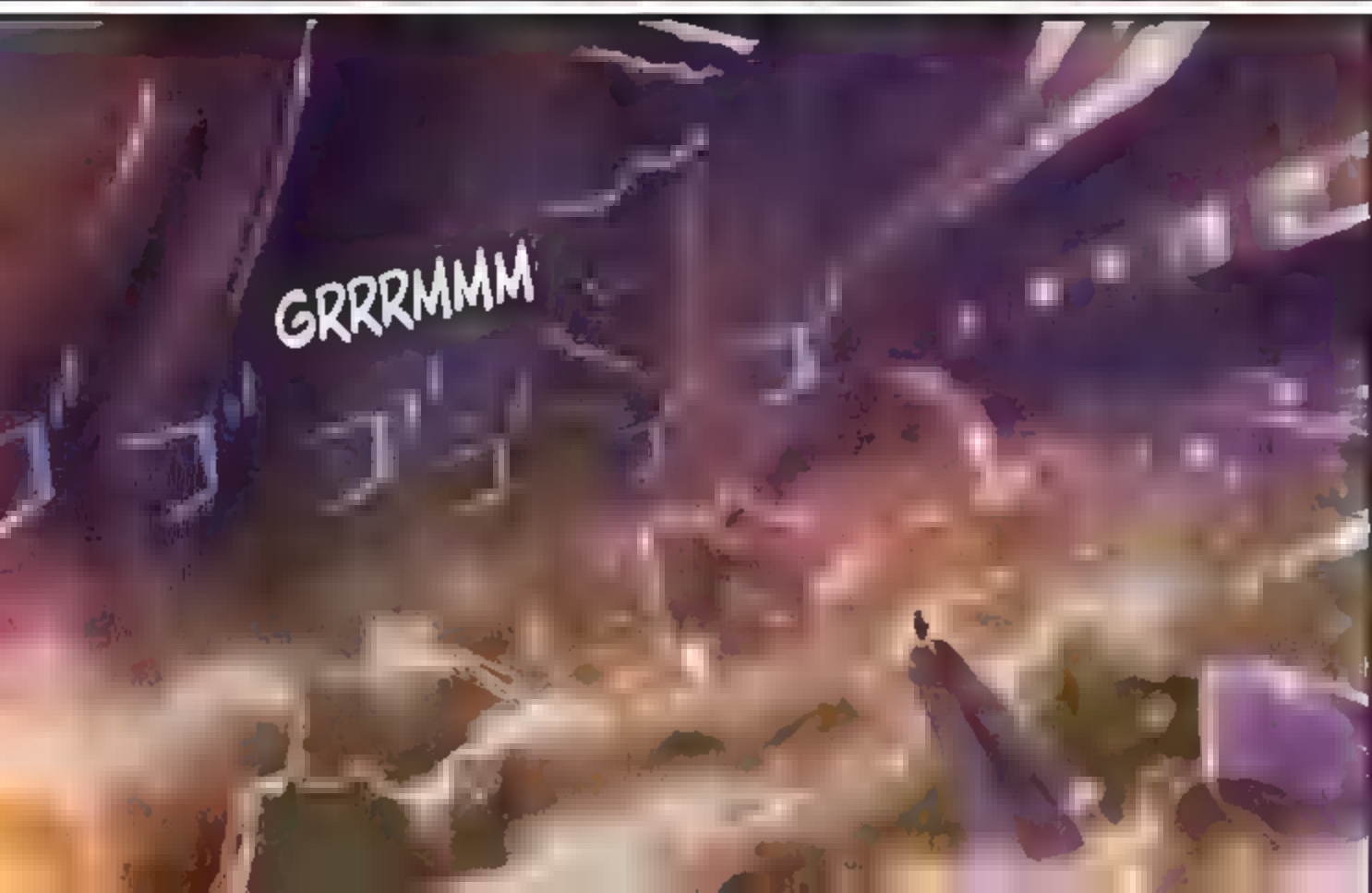
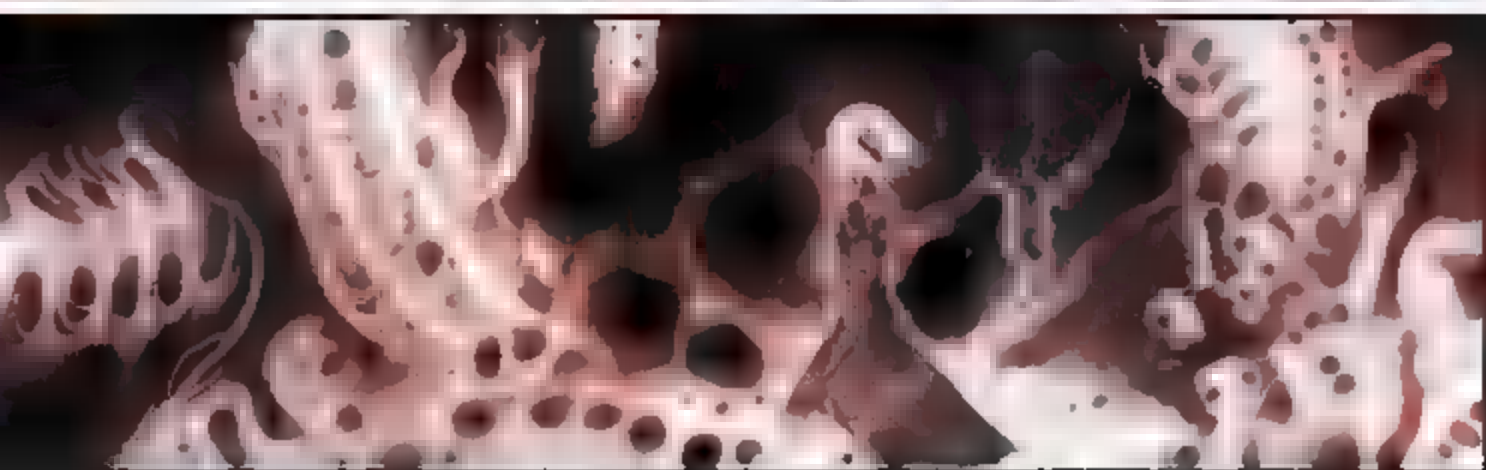
PROBABLY
INTENDS
TO SCRAP
ME...

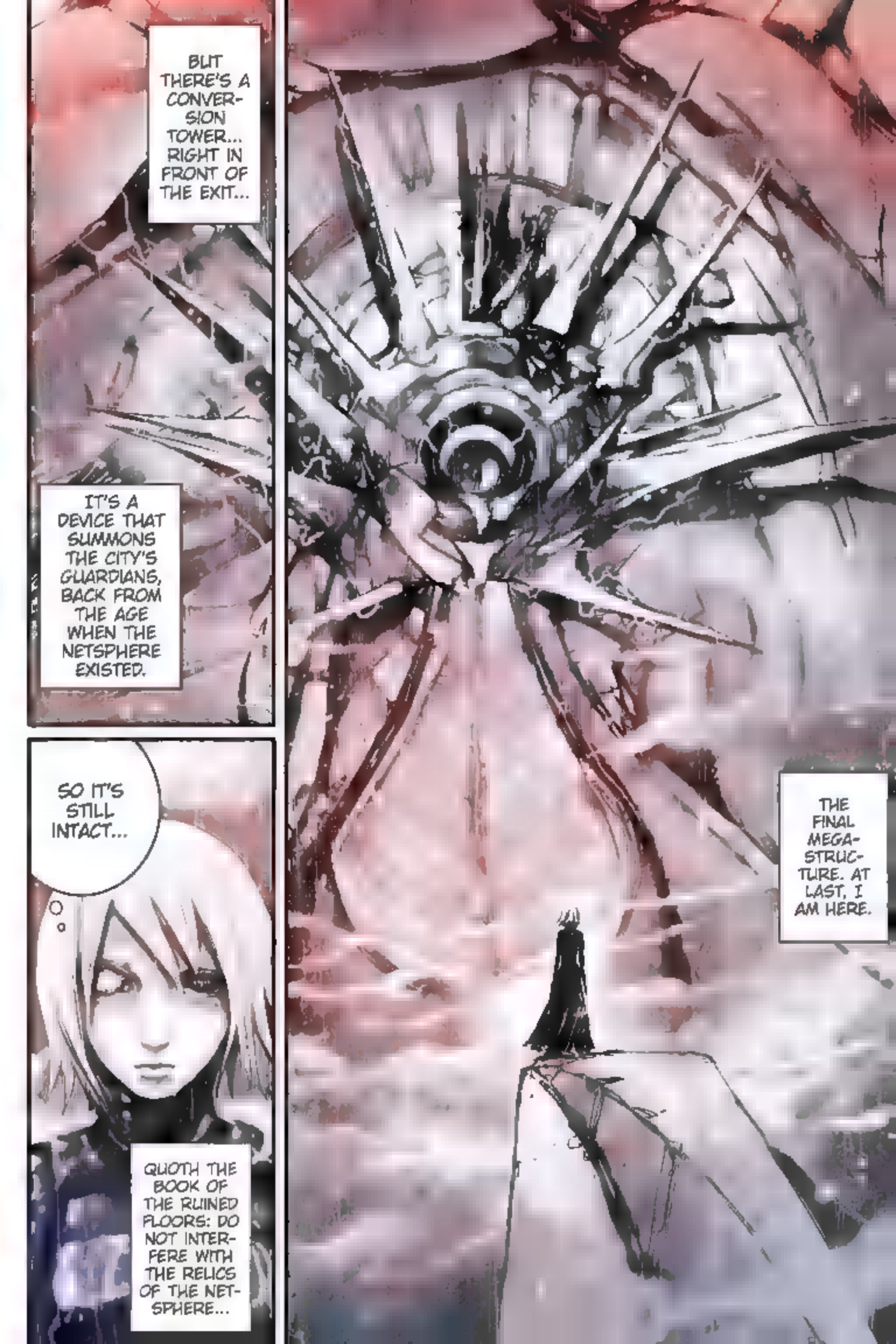
IT'S A
SMALL
BUILDER.

CLANK









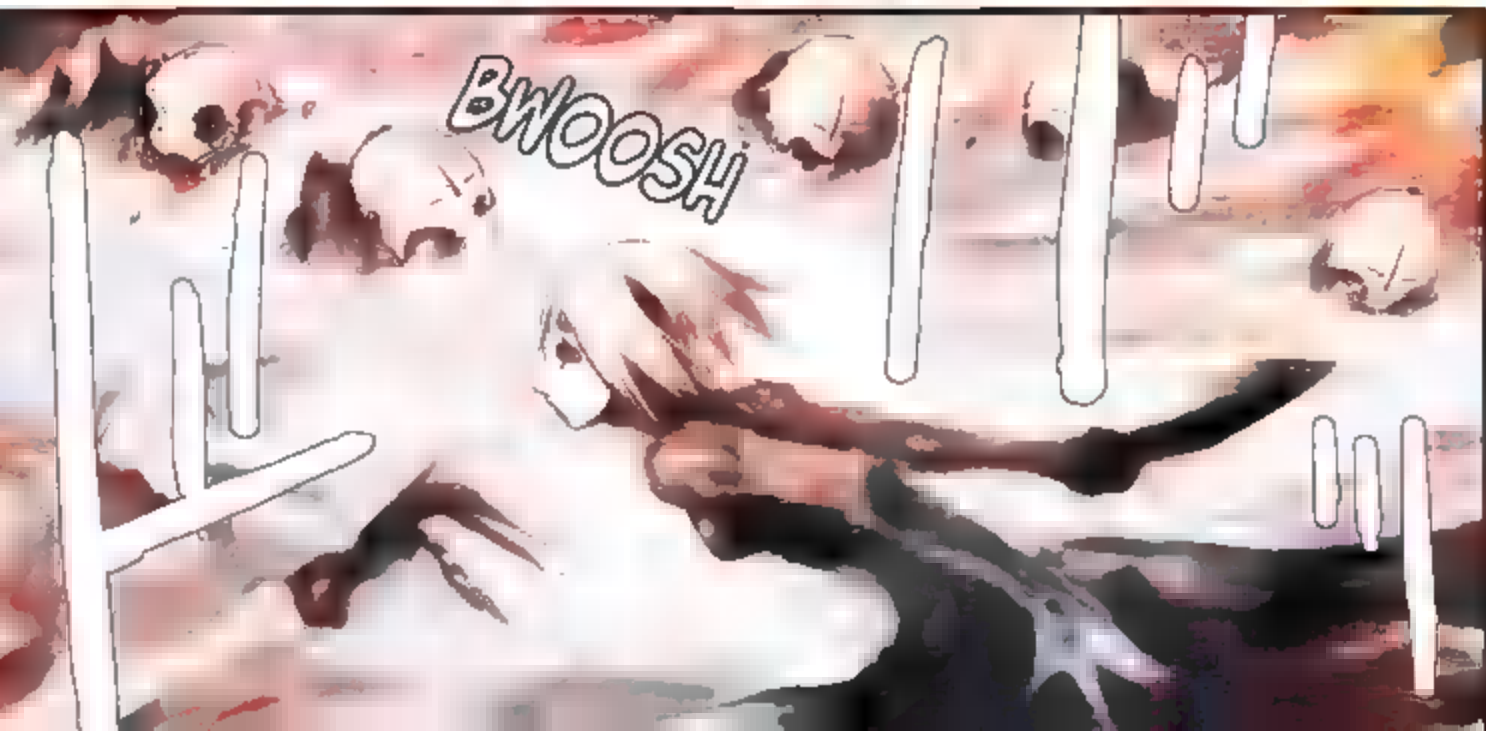
BUT
THERE'S A
CONVER-
SION
TOWER...
RIGHT IN
FRONT OF
THE EXIT...

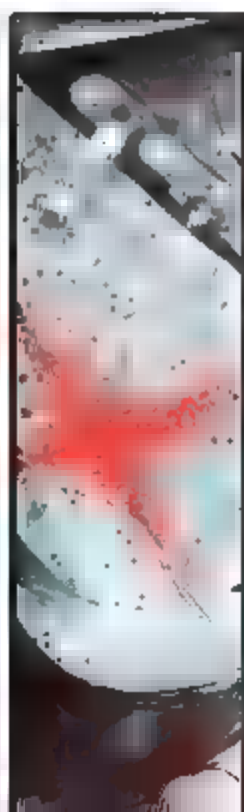
IT'S A
DEVICE THAT
SUMMONS
THE CITY'S
GUARDIANS,
BACK FROM
THE AGE
WHEN THE
NETSPHERE
EXISTED.

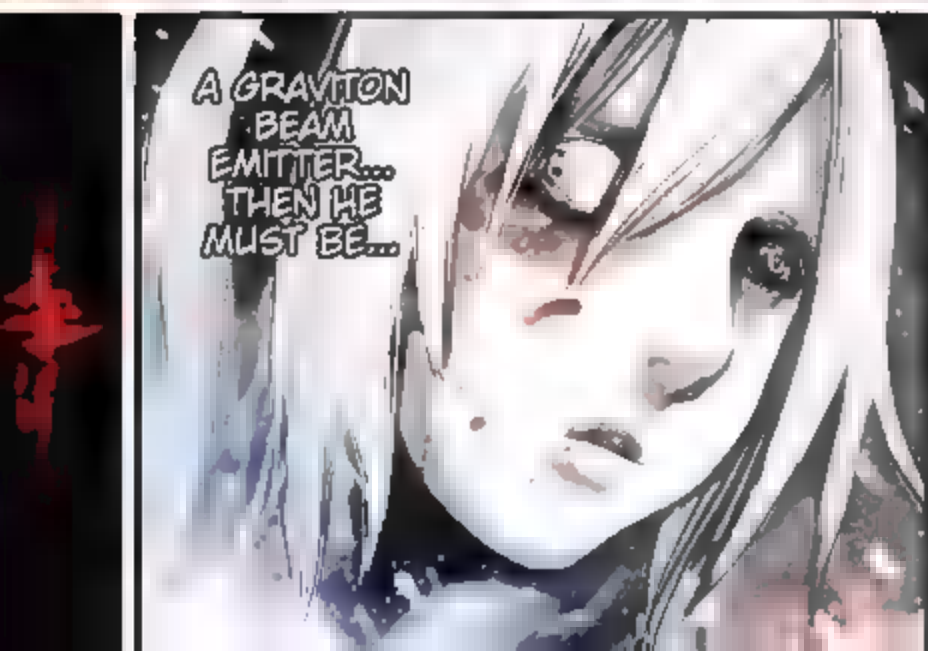
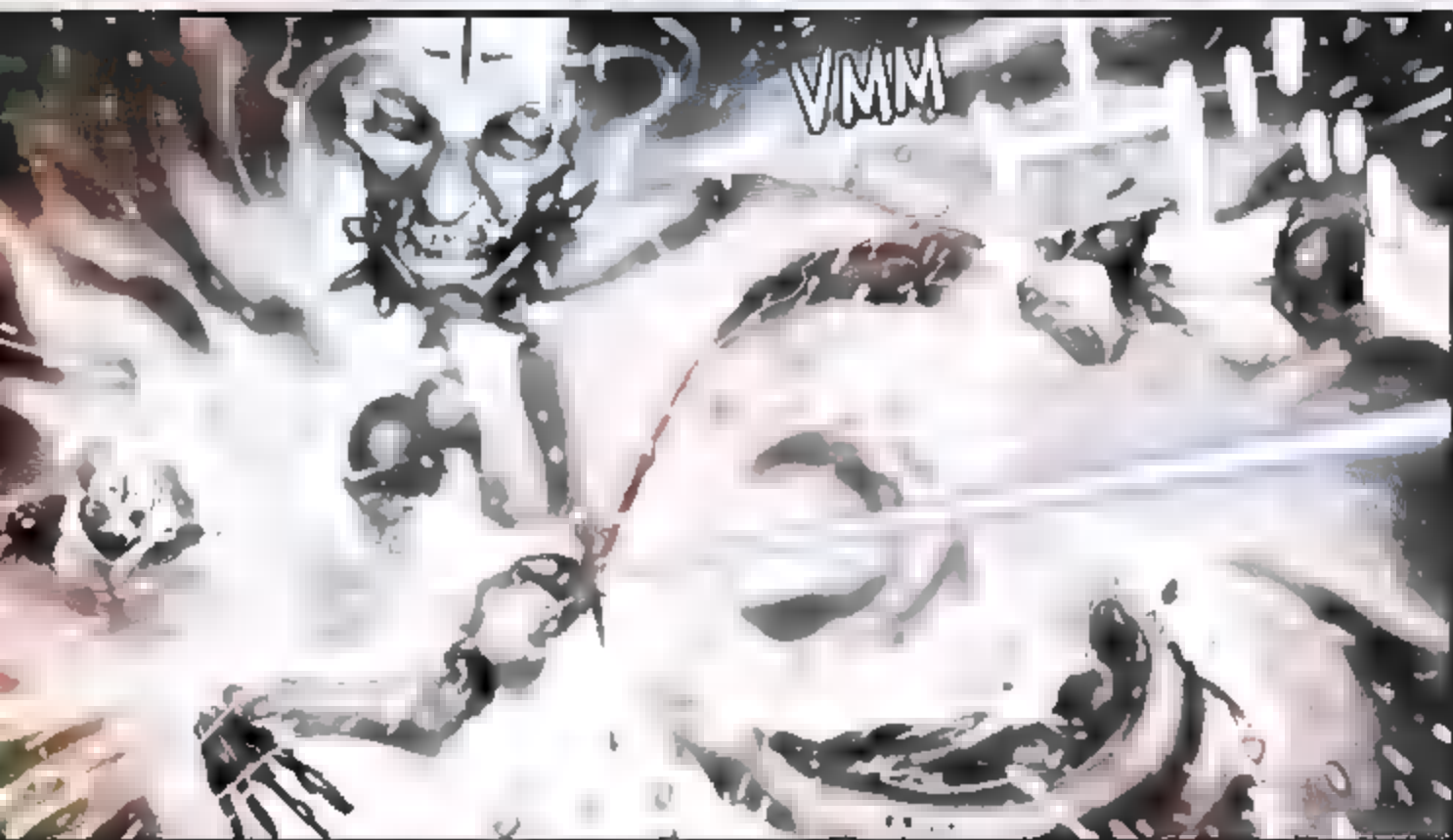
SO IT'S
STILL
INTACT...

QUOTH THE
BOOK OF
THE RUINED
FLOORS: DO
NOT INTER-
FERE WITH
THE RELICS
OF THE NET-
SPHERE...

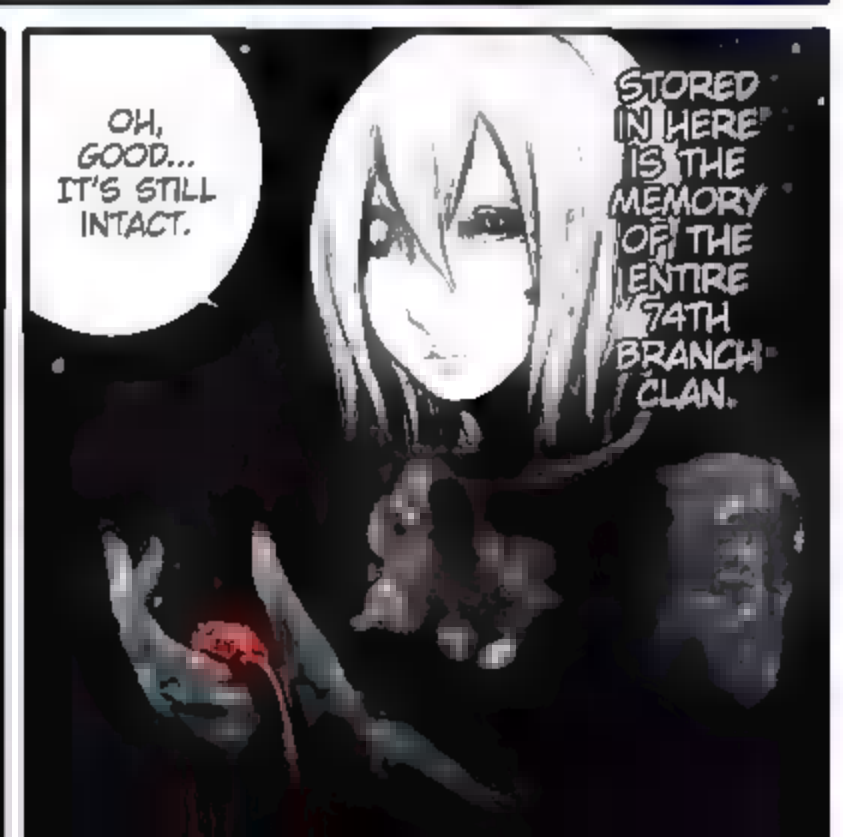
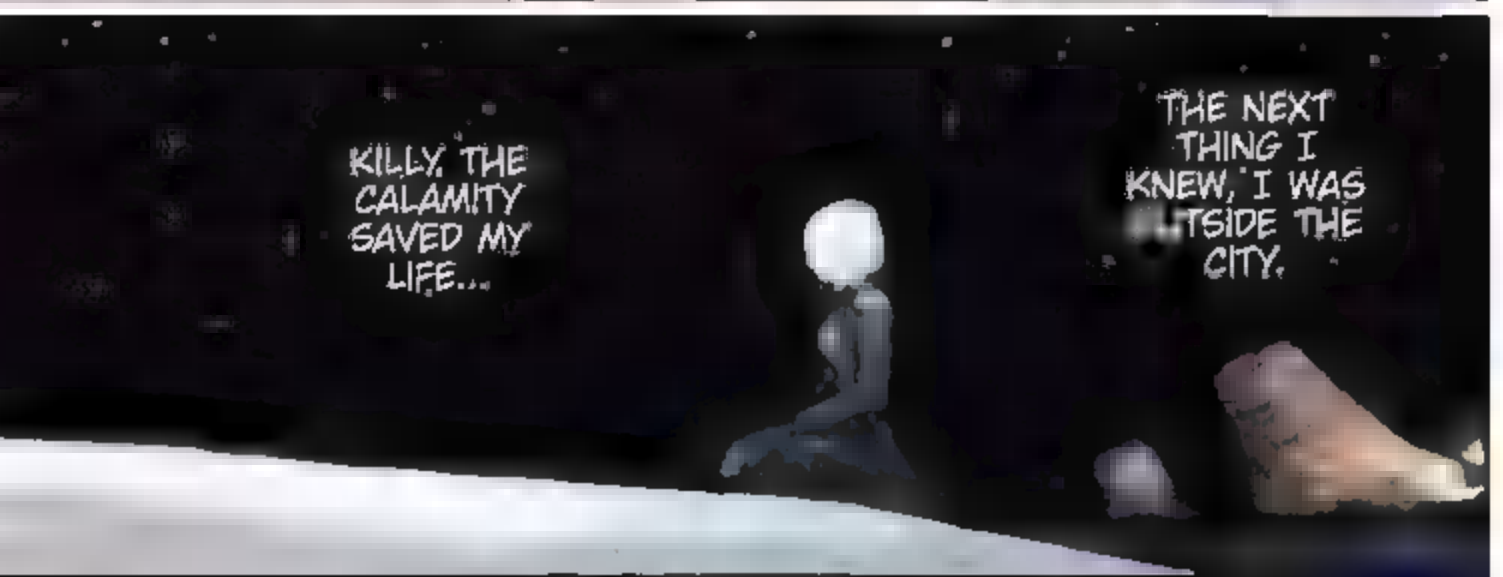
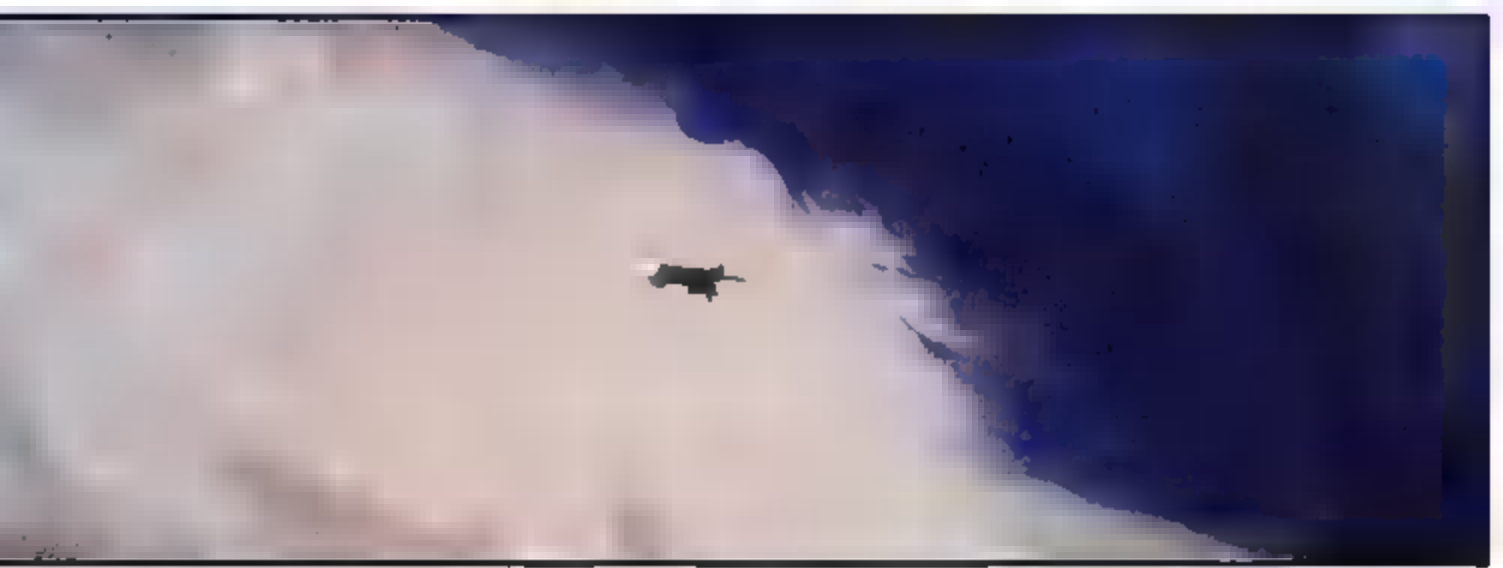
THE
FINAL
MEGA-
STRUC-
TURE. AT
LAST, I
AM HERE.













IN THE
HOPE OF
REBUILDING
MY HOME...

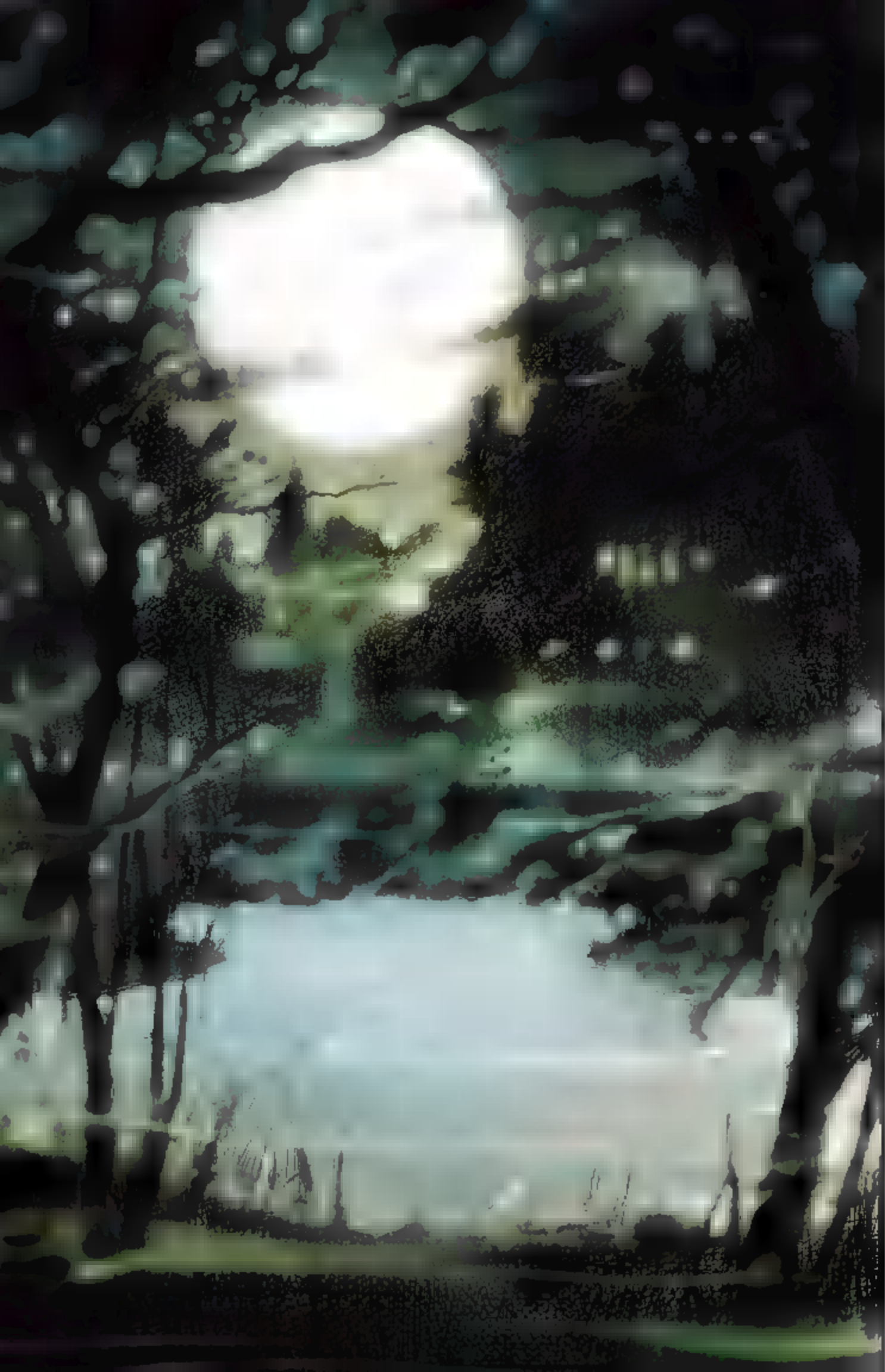
AND SO I
ESCAPED
THE CITY

08

BLAME!
EIGHTH-GENERATION
PCELL'S MEGASTRUCTURE
ESCAPE CHRONICLE - END

09

GOD OF THE SWAMP



CHOKK

CHOKK

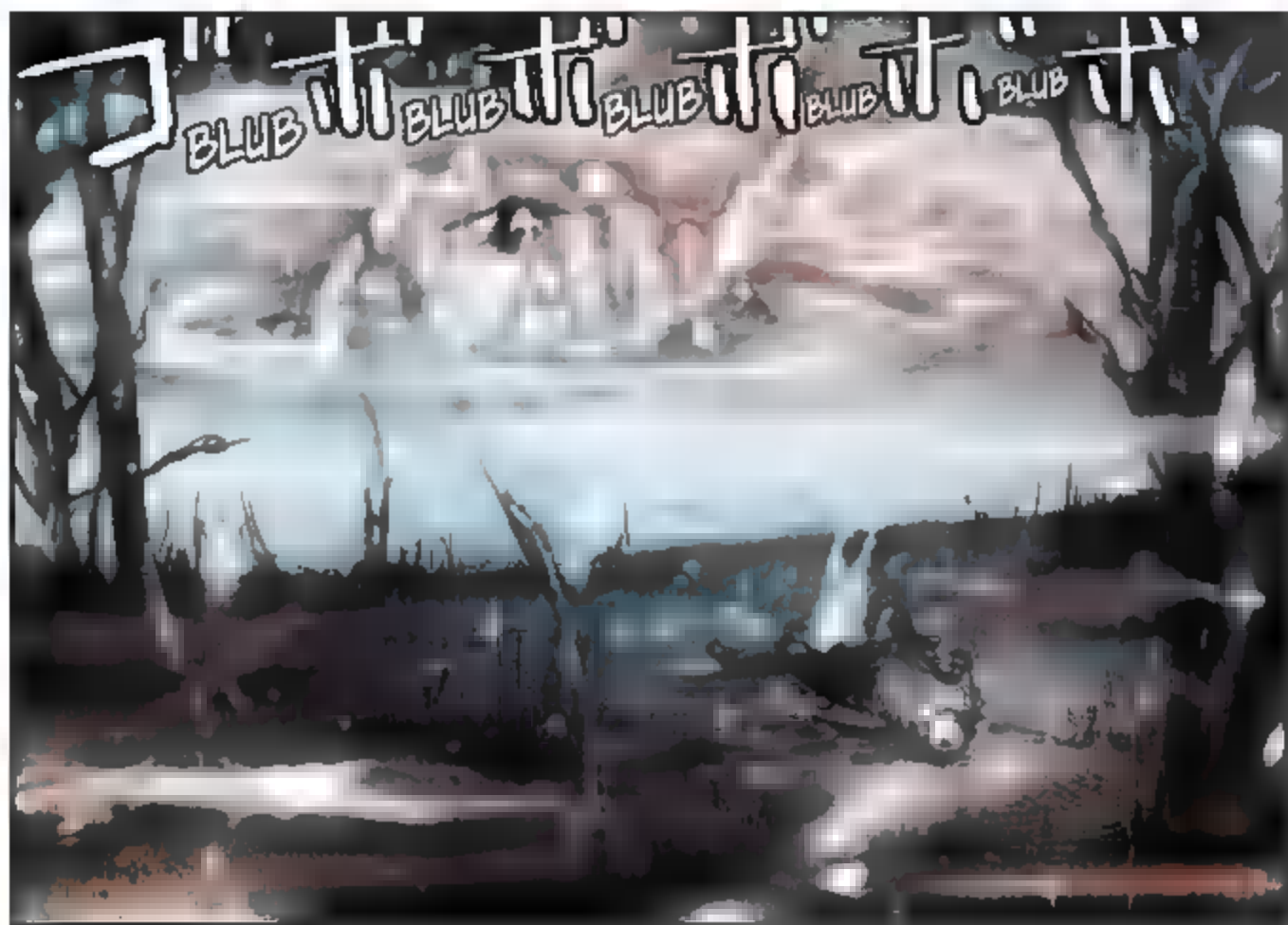
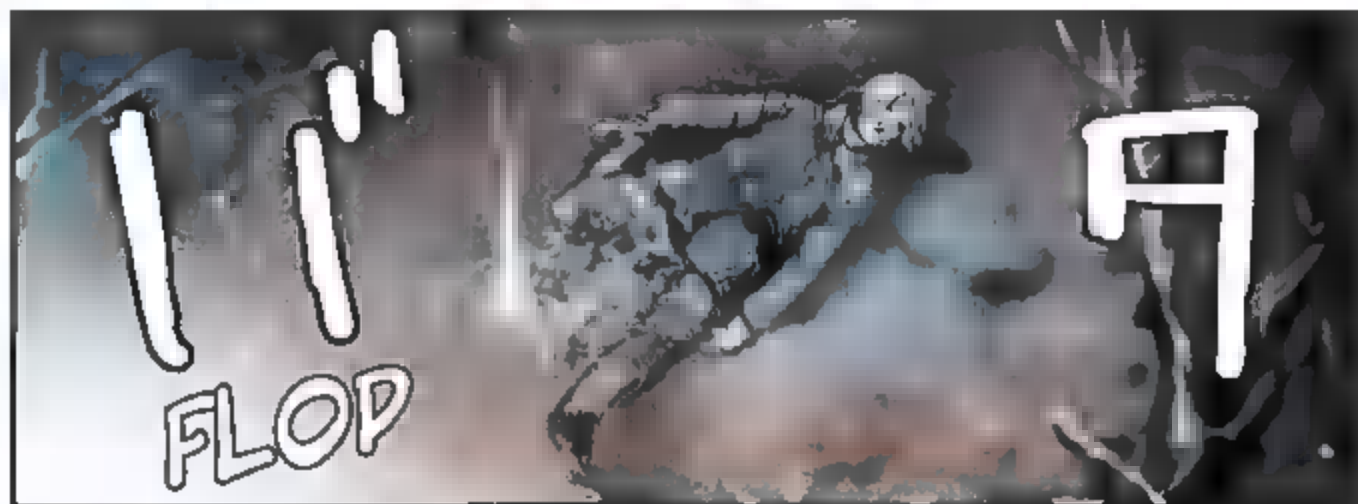


SPLUSH









09

GOD OF THE SWAMP - END

BLAME ACADEMY! AND SO ON TSUTOMU NIHEI ANTHOLOGY / COMMENTARY

A FLOWER OF MOË BLOOMING IN THE SORROW OF KOWLOON BY TORU HONDA

I GOT A NOTICE FROM THE EDITOR I-LIE ASKING FOR A PIECE OF COMMENTARY FOR A VOLUME OF *BLAME!*. BUT I DON'T HAVE THE KIND OF SCIENTIFIC MIND NEEDED TO TALK ABOUT HARD SF, AND I'VE BEEN ON THE RUN FROM MY HAYAKAWA EDITOR, SO I APOLOGIZED, SAYING THAT I COULDN'T DO IT.

BUT THEN I-LIE SAID, "ACTUALLY, I WANT YOU TO COMMENT ON *BLAME ACADEMY!* INSTEAD!"

I SEE.

BLAME ACADEMY! IS A WORK FEATURING THE CHARACTERS OF THE ULTRA-HARD DYSTOPIAN SF SERIES *BLAME!*, IN WHICH THE UNCONTROLLED EXPANSION OF TECHNOLOGY THRUSTS HUMANITY INTO A GIANT DEAD WORLD, PLACED INTO THE SETTING OF A SCHOOL MANGA, FOR SOME REASON. IT'S A SERIES OF STORIES THAT MAKE ALL OF ITS READERS WONDER IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO POOR NIHEI-SENSEI. BY THE THIRD STORY, THE CHARACTERS NO LONGER RESEMBLE THEIR ORIGINAL SELVES, RESULTING IN A COMBINATION OF SMOOTH, BUSTY FEMALES STRAIGHT OUT OF *AIR GEAR* ALONGSIDE HAUNTED DYSTOPIAN CREATURES FROM SOME HORRIFIC REALM. IN FACT, I COULD GO MORE INTO DETAIL ON THE FINER BIZARRETTIES OF THE STORIES, BUT THAT WOULD SPOIL THE SURPRISE, SO IF YOU HAVEN'T YET, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND READING THEM TO SEE THE FULL EXTENT OF THEIR MOË EVOLUTION.

IT MAY DEPEND ON THE READER'S OPINION WHETHER OR NOT THAT COUNTS AS "FORWARD EVOLUTION," HOWEVER.

EACH STORY ENDS WITH A VERY CLICHÉD PATTERN OF CIBO'S PANTIES, FULL FRONTAL NUDITY, OR NIPPLES ACCIDENTALLY THRUST INTO KILLY'S VIEW, PROMPTING HER TO PUMMEL HIM. IT'S A CONCEPT I'D LOVE TO SEE IN A MONTHLY FORMAT. BY THE WAY, THE THIRD STORY FEATURED AN EDITORIAL BLURB CALLING IT "WORLD-CENTRIC SF," BUT WHAT EXACTLY MAKES THIS "WORLD-CENTRIC" WILL BE AN ETERNAL MYSTERY. MORE ON THAT TERM LATER.

AT THE START OF THE 21ST CENTURY, JAPAN'S CREATIVE WORLD WAS THRUST INTO A MYSTERIOUS "MOË BOOM." PERHAPS THE START OF THE MOË BOOM CAME WHEN SGT. FROG SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GREAT FRENCH PROPHET NOSTRADAMUS'S PREDICTION OF THE GREAT KING OF TERROR WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE ADORABLE TEEN ANGOL MOIS-CHAN

THE LATE 20TH CENTURY WAS OVERFLOWING WITH POSTMODERN NIHILISM, LEADING TO A MIRACULOUS STORM OF DYSTOPIAN FICTION. TECHNOLOGY, THE SYMBOL OF BRIGHT PROGRESS SINCE THE LATE 19TH CENTURY, MADE A TURNABOUT INTO A WEAPON THAT THREATENED HUMAN SOCIETY IN COUNTLESS STORIES THROUGHOUT JAPAN AFTER THE OIL SHOCKS OF THE 1970S. EVEN THE CAPITALIST SUPERPOWER OF AMERICA WAS DARKENED BY THE GRAY FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY RUN AMOK.

THIS "ANTIFUTURIST" VIEW IS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF THE AMERICAN MOVIE *BLADE RUNNER* AND THE CONCURRENT TREND OF CYBERPUNK SF, AS WELL AS THE TWIN PILLARS OF POST-WAR JAPANESE MANGA AND ANIME, *AKIRA* AND *NEON GENESIS EVANGELION*.

THE CONCLUSION TO THE "GRAND NARRATIVE" IN REAL LIFE CAME WITH THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL AND THE SOVIET UNION, BUT IN THE WORLD OF CREATIVE FICTION, THIS PHENOMENON EVOLVED RAPIDLY THROUGHOUT THE 80S AND 90S.

THE GRAND NARRATIVE OF THE LATTER 20TH CENTURY WAS BELIEF THAT CAPITALISM AND TECHNOLOGY WOULD LEAD HUMANITY TO A HAPPY FUTURE. BUT THE SF PRODUCED AFTER *BLADE RUNNER* WAS THE NEGATIVE OF THIS BELIEF, ITS ANTI-TECHNOLOGICAL IMPRINT, AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE MODERN NIHILISM OF CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY.

BUT WHEN THE 21ST CENTURY CAME, HUMANITY DID NOT PERISH.

IT BROUGHT ABOUT THE RISE OF THE "WORLD-CENTRIC" STORY, OR IN OTHER WORDS, A STORY IN WHICH THE NARRATOR'S OWN STRUGGLE, USUALLY ROMANTIC, IS EXPANDED TO HAVE WORLDWIDE RAMIFICATIONS. OR AS I LIKE TO CALL THEM, "3-METER-RADIUS STORIES," AFTER THE PERSONAL DISTANCE THAT SUPPOSEDLY FOSTERS ROMANCE. IF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THESE STORIES WAS SUMMED UP IN ONE STATEMENT, IT WOULD BE, "I DON'T NEED AN EVANGELION, I DON'T CARE ABOUT HUMANITY, I JUST WANT TO HIT IT OFF WITH CHICKS!"

THESE WORLD-CENTRIC STORIES STILL RETAINED THE TRAPPINGS OF SF ELEMENTS AND LITERARY CYNICISM AS AN "EXCUSE," BUT EVENTUALLY THOSE EXTERNAL IMPURITIES WERE ELIMINATED, LEAVING ONLY THE PURIFIED, BLIND HOPE OF MOÉ, AND THE IDOLIZATION OF THE CHARACTER.

IN THE CYCLE OF THE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF STORIES, THIS MOVEMENT WAS AKIN TO THE AUTHOR, EDITOR, AND READER EACH SIMULTANEOUSLY ABANDONING THEIR SELF-AWARENESS AT ONCE.

IT WAS THE ARRIVAL OF THE MOÉ BOOM.

AMID THIS AVALANCHE PHENOMENON, MANY OF THE GREAT DYSTOPIAN ARTISTS OF THE 80S AND 90S BEGAN TO ATTEMPT THEIR OWN MOÉ WORKS IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY, AN ACT OF MASS SUICIDE THAT WOULD MAKE LEMMINGS PROUD.

HIDEYUKI FURUHASHI, A HARD SF LIGHT-NOVELIST WHO PLUMBED THE DEPTHS OF DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE SINCE HIS DEBUT, *BLACK ROD*, AND DID MUCH FOR THE RISE OF THE DENGEKI BUNKO PUBLISHING LINE, UNVEILED THE HEARTWARMING FAMILY COMEDY *THE TATSUMORI'S' DINNER TABLE* IN 2000. IT WAS A QUESTIONABLE ATTEMPT AT MOÉ, GIVEN THAT THE MAIN HEROINE WAS MADE OF METAL AND GALACTIC WARFARE PROMPTLY ERUPTED, BUT FURUHASHI CONTINUED TO EXPERIMENT WITH MOÉ ALONGSIDE HIS DARKER WORK, UNTIL IN 2006 HE PUBLISHED *ULTRA SISTER WARS SISMAGEDDON*, WHICH WAS ESSENTIALLY IF ALL 108 "STARS OF DESTINY" FROM THE *SUIKODEN* EPIC WERE DEPICTED AS LITTLE SISTERS.

THE *EVEN A MONKEY CAN DRAW MANGA* DUO OF KENTARO TAKEKUMA AND KOJI AIHARA ATTEMPTED TO TRACE THE RISE OF THE MOÉ ART-STYLE AND ANALYZE THE BOOM IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN THEIR INIMITABLE STYLE. EVENTUALLY, KENTARO TAKEKUMA, A LIVING LEGEND OF THE DYSTOPIAN STYLE IF EVER THERE WAS ONE, ATTEMPTED *EVEN A MONKEY 2.0*, A HARUHI SUZUMIYA-STYLED MOÉ CHARACTER PROJECT, WHICH BACKFIRED SPECTACULARLY.

I CAN ALSO VIVIDLY RECALL THE SF GREAT YASUTAKA TSUTSUI CARELESSLY ATTEMPTING A "LIGHT NOVEL" IN THE MAGAZINE *FAUST* WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HARUHI'S NOIZI ITO.

EVER SINCE *S-F MAGAZINE* DID A FEATURE ON WORLD-CENTRIC STORIES, THE LITERARY WORLD AND ITS LONG DOWNTURN WERE PUT ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH MOÉ. EVEN *KOKUBUNGAKU*, THE MOST HARDLINE OF LITERARY MAGAZINES, PUT TOGETHER A MOÉ SPECIAL ISSUE.

ALL OF WHICH IS TO SAY THAT THE EXTRAORDINARY MOÉ BOOM IS SOMETHING LIKE A JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE MECHANISM ■ RESPONSE TO THE NIHILISM OF THE UNKNOWN 21ST CENTURY FOLLOWING THE LOSS OF THE GREAT NARRATIVE. THEREFORE, ALL THE MARKETS FOR OUR STORYTELLING MUST BE PAINTED OVER IN THE COLORS OF MOÉ, FOR WE HAVE LOST ALL OF THE STORIES WE ARE MEANT TO TELL.

...WELL, NOW THAT I'VE WRITTEN A BUNCH OF STUFFY POSTMODERN NONSENSE THAT AMOUNTS TO ANALYSIS AND HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CREATION OF BACKGROUND OF *BLAME ACADEMY!*, I'LL CONSIDER MY WORK HERE DONE. IF ANY PROBLEM WITH THIS EXISTS, IT SURELY LIES IN THE POOR JUDGMENT OF EDITOR I-UE, WHOSE ONLY MISSION IS TO CONTINUE DEMANDING POOR TSUTOMU NIHEI TO "TAKE CIBO'S CLOTHES OFF!" AND "DRAW CIBO'S NIPPLES AGAIN!"

AFTERNOON IS PRIMARILY KNOWN FOR THE FEEL-GOOD VIBES OF OH! MY GODDESS, BUT AS A RESPONSE TO THE GREATNESS OF BELLDANDY, THE REST OF THE MAGAZINE HAS TURNED INTO A DYSTOPIAN FORTRESS, A VERITABLE KOWLOON WALLED CITY OF MOURNING. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WOULD LOVE TO SEE AN ANTHOLOGY OF ALL THE AFTERNOON MANGA DONE IN A MOË STYLE, NOT JUST BLAME!. I WANT TO READ MOË LOVE-YAN, WHERE LOVE-YAN HAS EYEBALLS THAT TAKE UP HALF HER FACE, AND AN IDEALIZED KAZUFUSA DRAWN LIKE THE PROTAGONIST OF AN ERO-GAME, FLIRTING IT UP IN A SCHOOL SETTING. HOW ABOUT A CRAYFISH STUDENT PRESIDENT, WHERE ALL THE TEEN GIRLS FORM A HAREM CLAMORING FOR CRAYFISH'S ATTENTION? GIVEN THAT THE AUTHOR IS A FAN OF THE KEY GAME DEVELOPER, IT'S EASY TO ENVISION A BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL ACADEMY, AND I'D LOVE TO SEE MOZUYA-SAN GO EVEN FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD OF MOË CLICHÉ (VOICED BY RIE KUGIMIYA). PERSONALLY, I FIND MYSTERIOUS GIRLFRIEND X TO BE THE GREATEST MOË MANGA THERE IS, SO JUST PICTURE MIKOTO IN OUR IMAGINARY MOË AFTERNOON SPECIAL ISSUE, WEARING CAT EARS AND CAT TAIL, ENORMOUS EYES WELLING WITH TEARS AS SHE BATTLES A MYSTERY UFO WITH HER SCISSORS, PROCLAIMING, "THEY'RE NOT PANTIES, SO I'M NOT ASHAMED!"

BUT OF COURSE, THE CENTERPIECE OF MY MAGAZINE WILL BE YES, SATOSHI KARASUYA-TAN REALLY IS MOË.

POSTSCRIPT: BOOM-AND-BUST CYCLES TEND TO LAST TEN YEARS. PERHAPS WHEN THE DYSTOPIAN MOURNING STORY COMES BACK INTO VOGUE, THE BLAME! SERIES WILL MAKE ITS TRIUMPHANT RETURN.

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BATTLE LEPIDOPTERAN HAWK MOTHS - YOUNG GANGAN NO.3, 2007

BLAME! Academy and So On

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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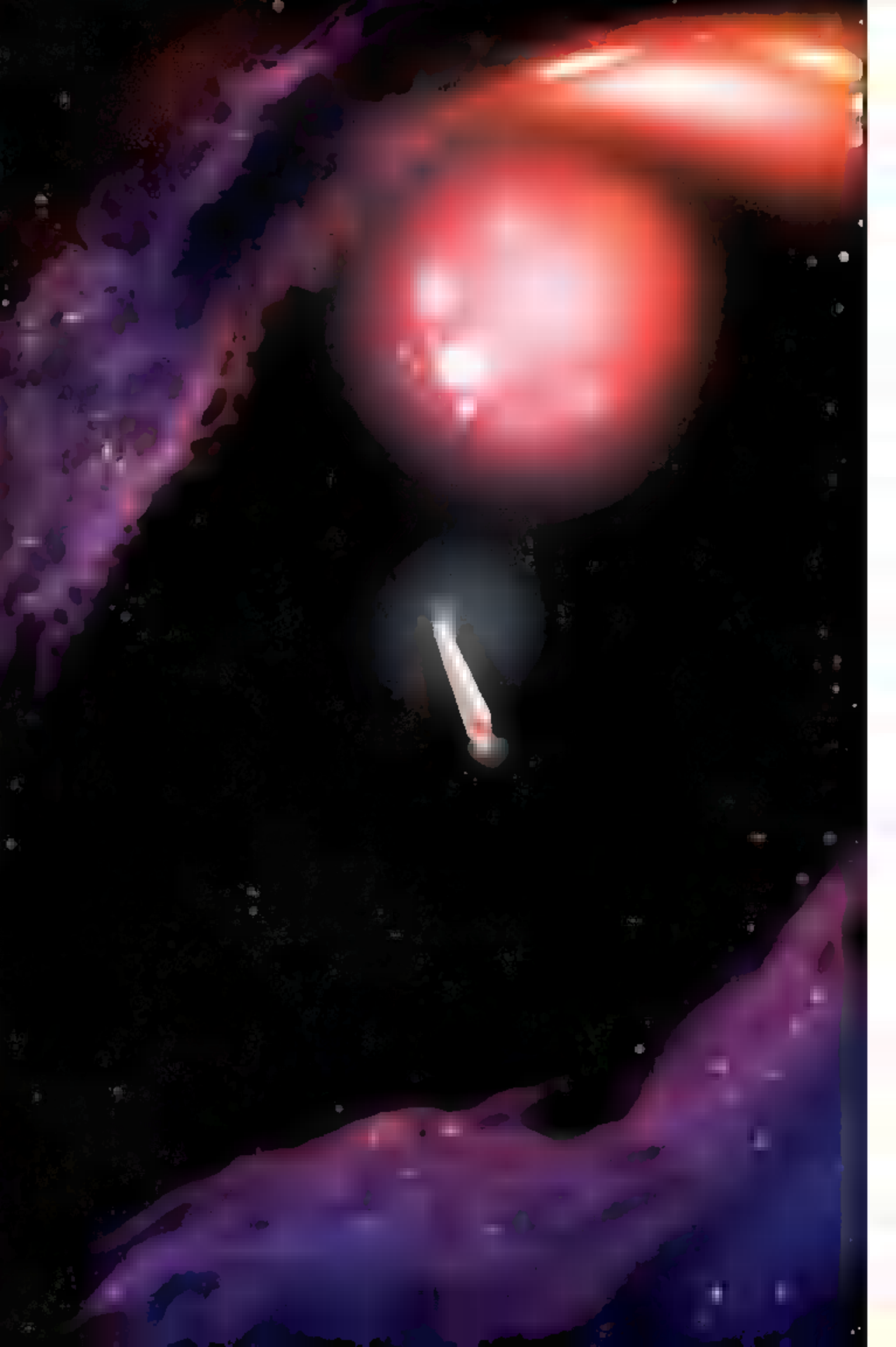
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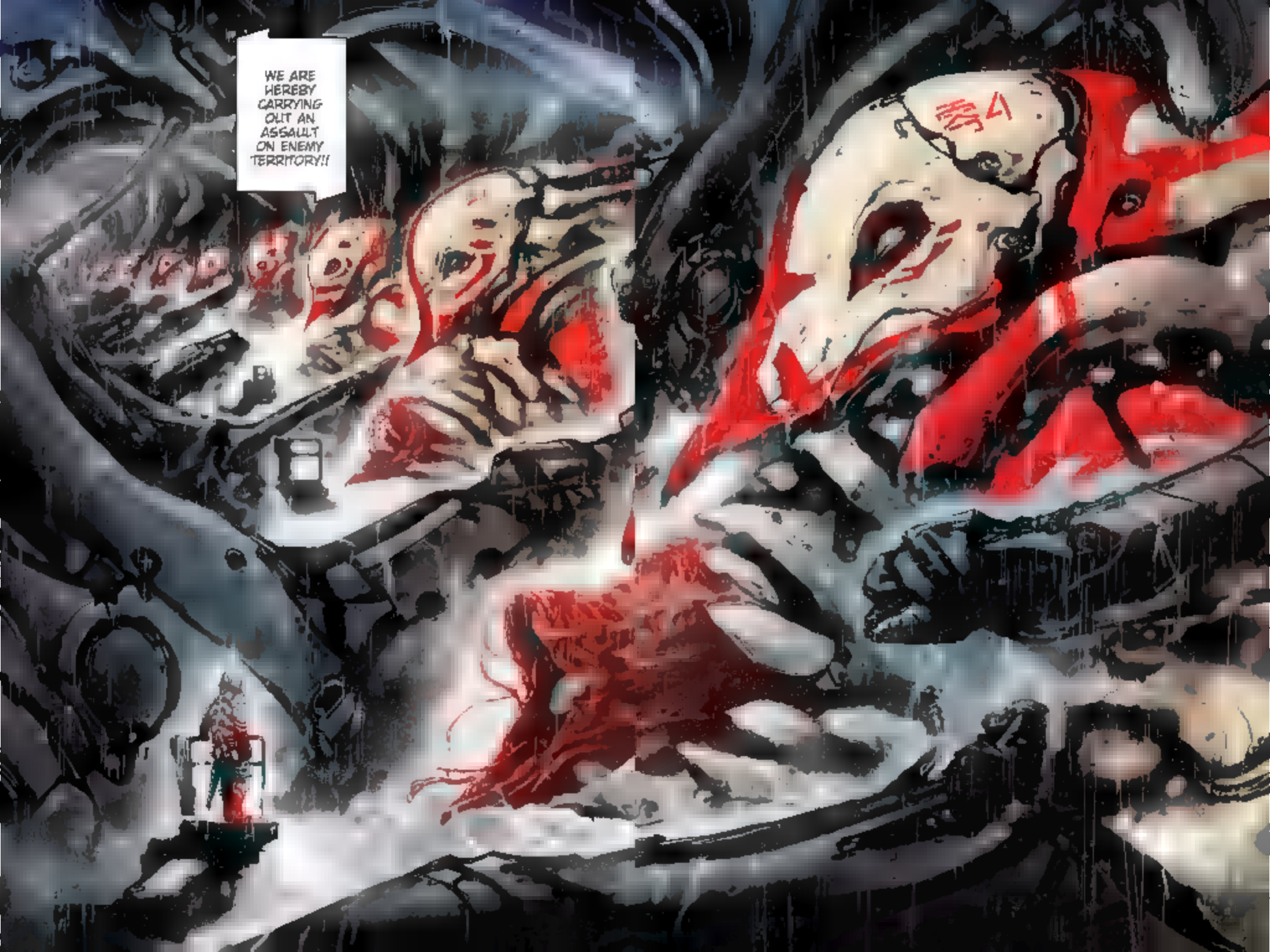
Editing: Josh Bettinger

10

BATTLE LEPIDOPTERAN
HAWK MOTHS



WE ARE
HEREBY
CARRYING
OUT AN
ASSAULT
ON ENEMY
TERRITORY!!





THIS
SHIP WILL
REACH
THE
THEATER
OF OP-
ERATIONS
MOMEN-
TARILY

THIS IS
VENGEANCE
FOR THE
LOSS OF OUR
PLANET, AND
A CRUCIAL
FOOTHOLD IN
RECLAIMING
THE EIGHTH
ALLIED
STARSPACE.

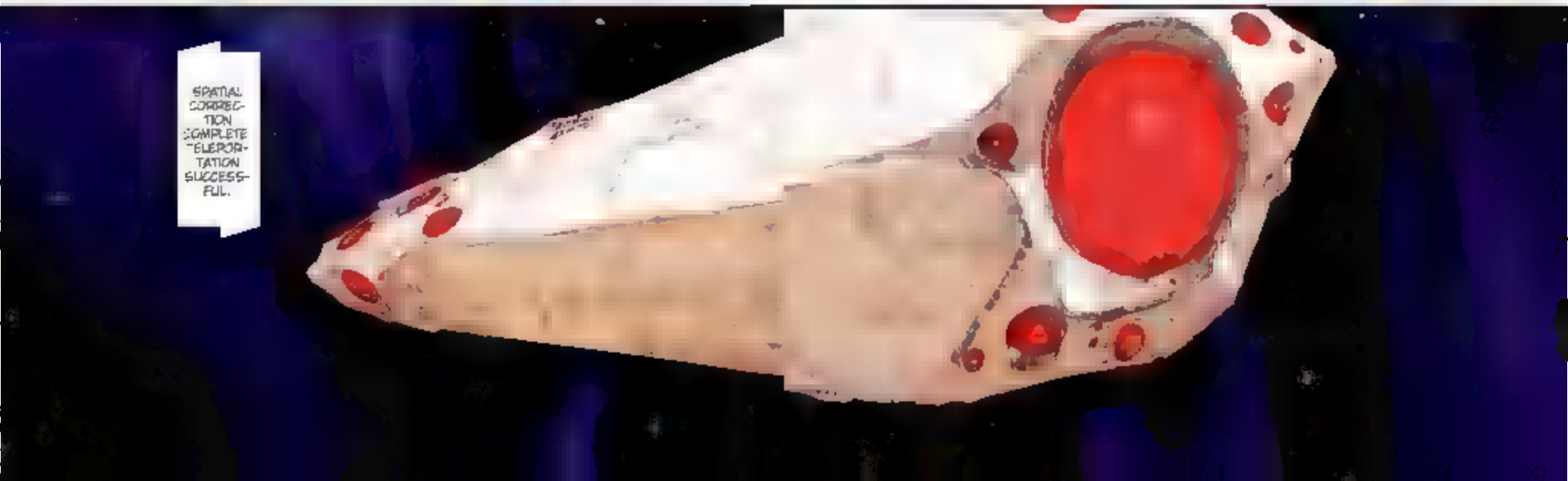


REACHING
ENEMY
SPACE!
UNLOCK-
ING
REVISED
FISSION
DRIVE!

ALL ANTI-
GALINA
ARMORED
HAWK
MOTHS,
PREPARE
FOR
BATTLE!



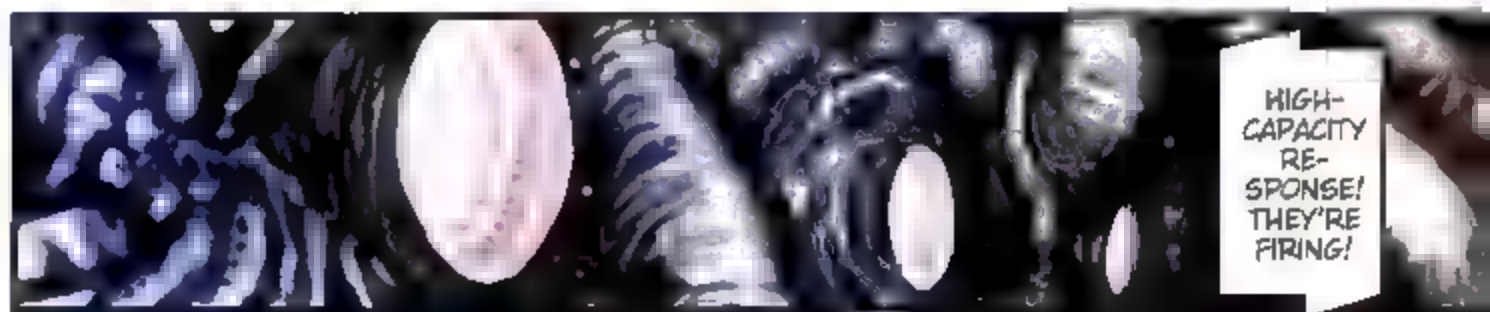
ALL
UNITS,
COMMIT
TO
CRUSH-
ING THE
ENEMY!



SPATIAL CORREC-
TION
COMPLETE
TELEPOR-
TATION
SUCCESS-
FUL.



ENEMY
SHIP
BELOW!
LENGTH
OF
OVER
100
KILOME-
TERS!



HIGH-
CAPACITY
RE-
SPONSE!
THEY'RE
FIRING!



SORTIE
HAWK
MOTHS!



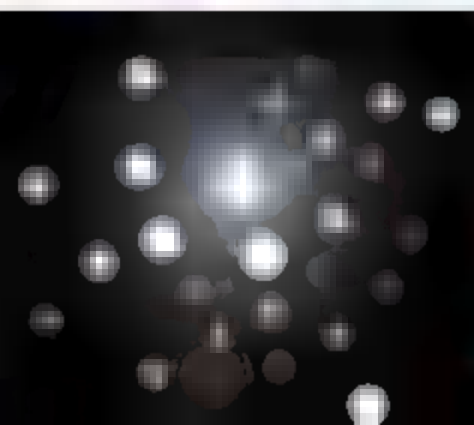
ENEMY
SHIP
EMITTING
GALINAS!

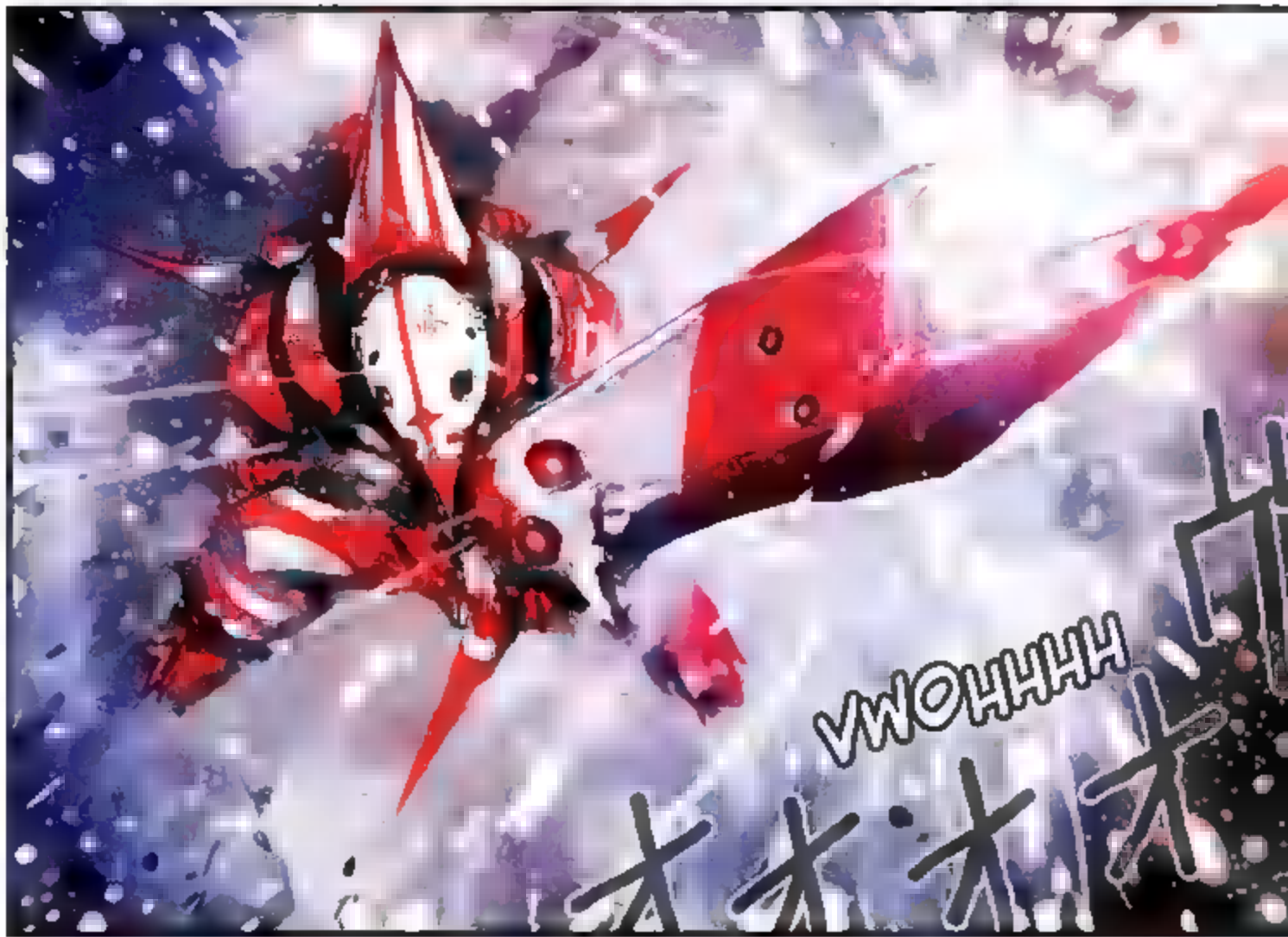


SHELL
HIT!
DAMAGE
TO 312
WATCHES!

DE-
PLOY-
ING
STAG-
NA-
TION
FIELD!









CAREFUL OF THE ICE WALLS. THEY'LL REWRITE YOU.



CRIMSON HAWK MOTH PLATOON HAS INFILTRATED ENEMY SHIP.



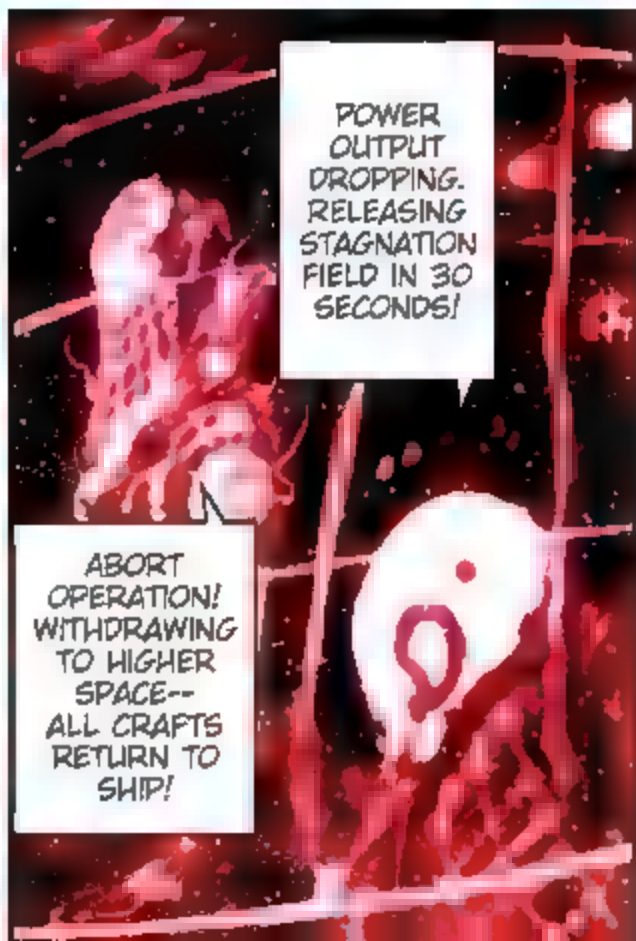
UNIT 4!!!



CRIMSON PLATOON'S NOT GETTING THE SIGNAL. I'LL CALL THEM BACK.



WHERE ARE YOU GOING, UNIT 4? RETREAT!

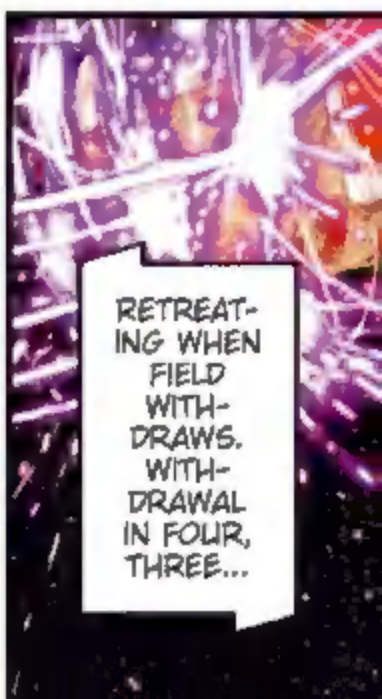
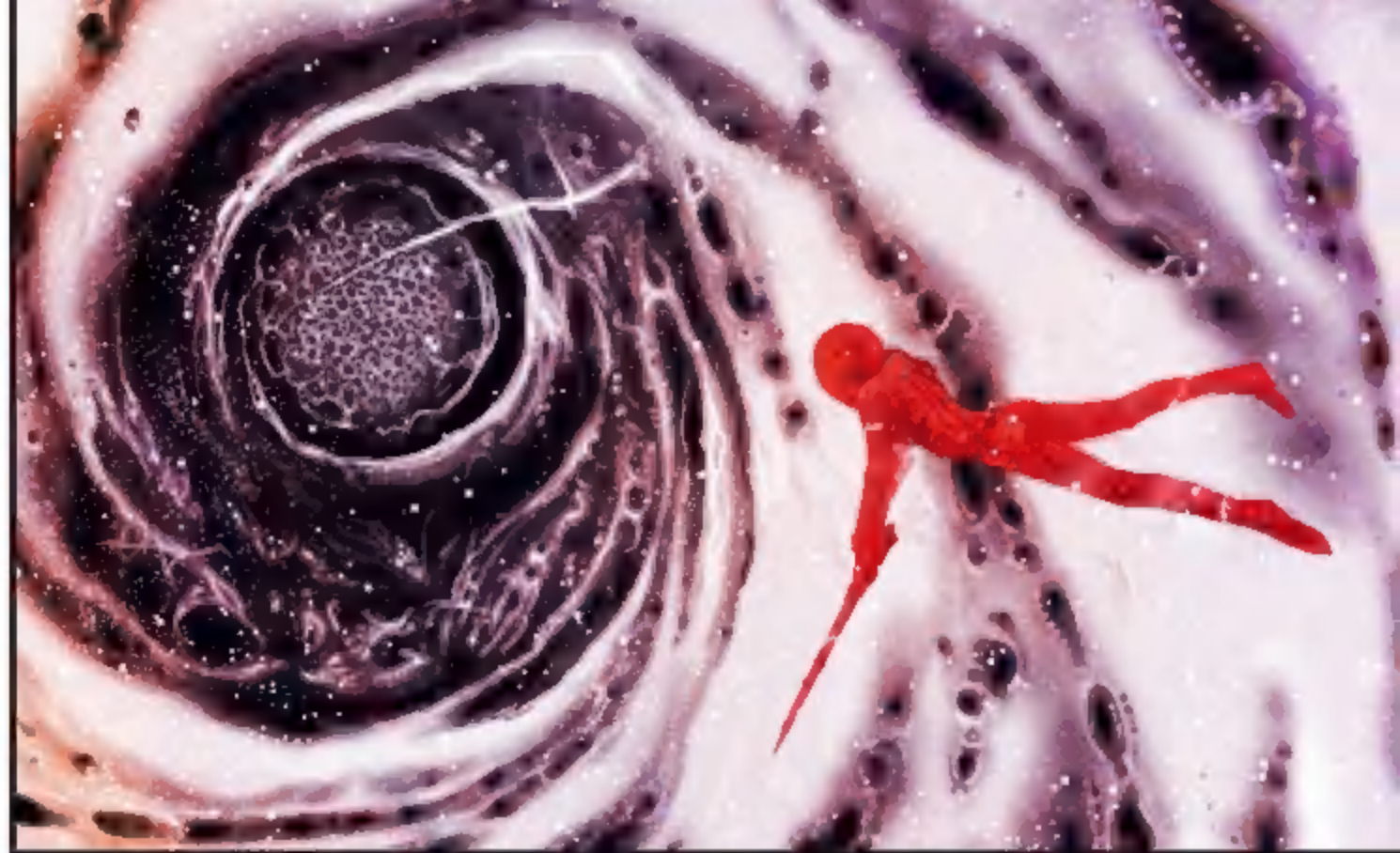


POWER OUTPUT DROPPING. RELEASING STAGNATION FIELD IN 30 SECONDS!

ABORT OPERATION! WITHDRAWING TO HIGHER SPACE-- ALL CRAFTS RETURN TO SHIP!







RETREAT-
ING WHEN
FIELD
WITH-
DRAWS.
WITH-
DRAWAL
IN FOUR,
THREE...

ENEMY
CRAFT
DECOUPLING!
CRIMSON
HAWK
MOTHS HAVE
DESTROYED
THE ENEMY
CRAFT!
WE ARE
VICTORIOUS!

GRRRGGGG



10 - BATTLE LEPIDOPTERAN
HAWK MOTHS - END